Inside This Issue . . .

Feature: Alberta As Health Hazard ..... p. 10-13

A look at the recently proposed labor legislation that would prohibit many Alberta unionized workers, including nurses, from striking. The action is viewed both in terms of the mentality that produced it as well as in the context of other equally repressive policies in Alberta, including those involving homebirth, hospital user fees, social service cutbacks, extra billing, sexist comments made by several Alberta judges. The same life-denying mentality is behind all of it, resulting in what we see as an unhealthy environment for Alberta women.

In Our Own Words ..... p. 2-3

This is where you get to find out what Webspinner readers have to say for themselves since the publication of our first issue in February. The web has grown in a short time and this is but a sample of how far it extends.

Large As Life ..... p. 7

All about the new volunteer association starting up in Alberta aimed at helping fat women accept their bodies and like themselves. A positive, encouraging article for the many, many of us who don't and never have fitted the "cover-girl" image.

Just For Fun ..... p. 15

Need a good bonkers session? A madcap, to-the-point collection of feminist humor and asides.

It's Conference Time ..... p. 16-17

The next few months will see women's conferences spring up like mushrooms. This informative section gives you all the latest news you need to know about just what's going on.

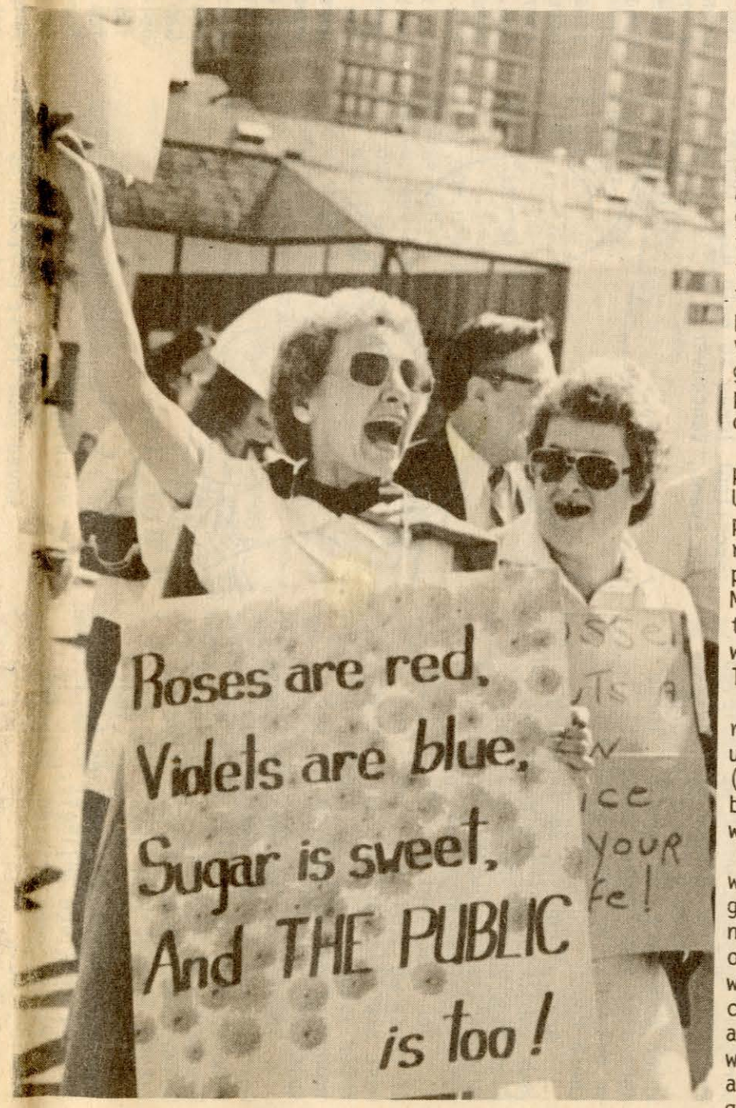
Heather Bishop's Concert ..... p. 19

To the delight of many, Heather Bishop was back in Calgary April 23 for a concert. It featured many of her new songs. Susan Vensel was there and shares what it was like in her review.

April 1983

Webspinner

$1.00 CALGARY EDITION Vol. 1 No. 2



UNA calls gov't. shaft

Alberta's nurses pulled no punches during their appearance April 25 before the provincial government public hearings into the proposed Bill 44. Labelling the government "sexist" and vengeful, United Nurses of Alberta (UNA) president Margaret Ethier, made it very clear UNA is not fooled by government claims the bill is for the public good, and further, vowed to defy the strike ban if necessary.

WEBSPINNER was just coming up to press time when we heard about the UNA response at the hearings. UNA's powerful and clear woman-supporting response was just too wonderful to pass up, so we are sharing some of Ms. Ethier's comments. Also, the tone of the UNA response dovetails well with our feature (see pages 10-13).

"I believe it was pure and simple revenge," said Ethier, "and I can understand that. Afterall, Lougheed's (Premier) boys don't take kindly to being outsmarted by a bunch of women."

"The majority of our nurses are women," she said, "and perhaps this government thought...it was not necessary to recognize the value of our work. And maybe they assumed women would avoid conflict at any cost. But we have found getting along often means getting less...and we are prepared to accept conflict as a necessary part of achieving our goals."

Our own words

Receiving your letters felt as though the treads we spun were being brought back to us on a warm breeze. Your support and creativity help the web to grow.

We wanted to print all your words, whether they came in the form of a letter or a comment on the subscription form. The only things we took out were specifics dealing with subscriptions and contributions, and personal messages which we believed were for the recipients eyes only.

These weren't the only words which came back, of course. There were also your spoken comments-- we only wish we could share all these too.

And, of course, we received your subscriptions and donations. (see Page 20.) These give Webspinner the wherewithal to continue spinning throughout the summer.

You also sent articles. Some of these we used this time; the rest are filed and may be used in later issues. This is another important way of keeping the web spinning.

There's no "Editor", of course. Our strange and new process has removed this particular piece of hierarchical security. Continuity between workshops is restricted to taking care of your subscriptions and filing material for next time-- therefore individual replies to your letters are unlikely.

Please keep writing, spinning, growing.....

Here's to the feminist network,
Brigitte Sutherland, HERizons,
Winnipeg.

Dear Webspinner,

Last week the Students' Union at the University of Alberta had a Women's Awareness Week, using the "blood money" from the Mr. and Mrs Nude Edmonton Contest held at SUB. Although I had not expected it, I was paid an honorarium for my participation in the program. That $50 is enclosed, along with another $50 on behalf of Kathleen Higgins, who addressed the students about AFWUFF (Alberta Federation of Women United for Families). It was at her talk that someone gave me Webspinner, and I am glad to see it in existence. I wasn't sure that Mrs. Higgins, who also got an honorarium, would think to send it to you. However, I'm sure she would be pleased to be acknowledged in your paper as co-adoptor, with me, of a printer. If you think she wouldn't be pleased, perhaps you could print this note over my name as sole adoptor, in the hope that at least some women will hear a different message from the one AFWUFF is promoting.

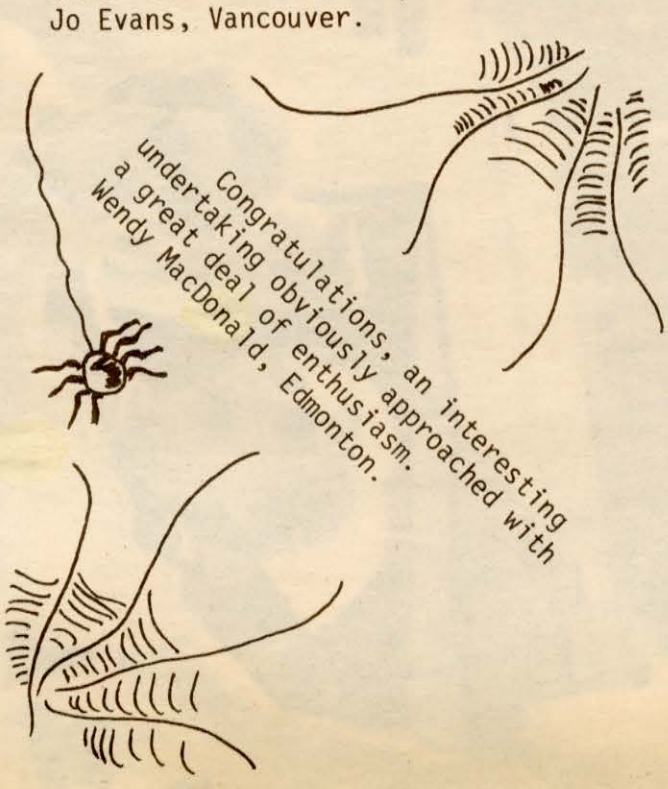
Yours sincerely,
Susan Jackel, Edmonton.

To Webspinner -

What excitement! What a marvellous first issue! Congratulations to the women who gave birth to such an inspiring set of pages!

Jo Evans, Vancouver.

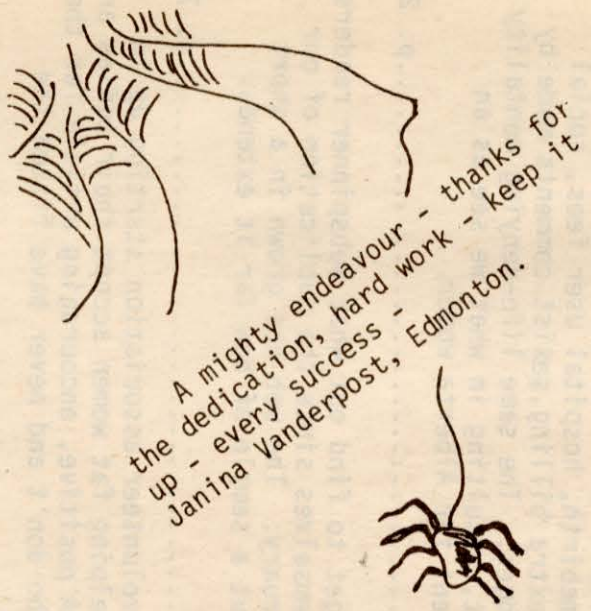
WONDERFUL!! I'm on a committee to get porn out of the UBC Bookstore - this issue had some excellent ideas to help us - thanx.
Jo Evans, Vancouver.



Dear Webspinner,

Loved your first edition, my only complaint is that your subscription box is part of the paper and to cut it out means that I'd have had to pass on a mangled paper.

Thanks again for the paper, it was great to read and pass along.
Jacquelyn Burles, Yellowknife.



Dear Sisters at Webspinner,

What a great idea - both the process and the product. I'm feeling a sense of loss of the good connections I made when I lived in Edmonton. Webspinner's a fine reminder.

Here in Victoria I've become involved in Voice of Women and on the IWD Committee. We had a successful day of events and even a small march, downtown, just when the Queen was on parade. We didn't get near enough to share our concerns!

All the best to you all,
Terry Padgham, Victoria.

Dear Webspinner Staff:

I was delighted to receive your first issue. I have missed the Calgary Women's Newspaper. However, it did seem to have a very limited view and I was especially glad to read that you intend to cover the rest of the province in more detail than that paper did.

I am an Albertan, but for two years I have lived in three different American states (in search of a PhD degree). It seems to me that in many ways Albertans and maybe Canadian women in general are better off than women Stateside (eg. Persons Act, etc). However, women here seem to be more aware that there is much that needs to be changed. What I have learned from women's struggles here (eg. ERA) is the need for political involvement on the part of women. Women are at best poorly represented and at worst maliciously misrepresented by the elected governments (and their bureaucracies) that I have observed. Women here are beginning to realise it and elections this year involved a greater number of female candidates than ever before (with improved chances of election "Gender Gap" it's called). I urge you to do everything that you can to motivate your readers to become politically active. And please do not forget, as active feminists did here in promoting the ERA, that there are many women whose consciousness is not raised to a very high level, but who are necessarily part of any change by women for women. To educate anyone, you must begin at a level that he/she can understand. It is easy to preach to the converted, but it does not change much. In that vein, do not forget older women. My mother has had many experiences that should have made her a feminist, but somehow she still sees womens' exclusion from the mainstream of influence to be their own fault. In any case, please send her a copy of your paper;
Thankyou,
Angeline Fitch, Grand Forks, ND.

Dear Webspinner,

I would like to share your special joy upon your birth!

To you...
Ardelle Dudley, Fort Saskatchewan.

Congratulations for a much needed paper.
Maria Eriksen, Calgary.

Good luck! Thanks for filling the void Calgary Women's Newspaper left in my life.
Gloria Filax, Edmonton.

Our own words

Dear Webspinners,

Congratulations on publishing this first issue of a Women's newspaper. It had a good variety of issues and information. I hope the response you receive will enable you to continue.

I received my copy at the first meeting of the newly formed Whitecourt Women's Group, about which I include the press clippings. Also included is a press clipping about a women's union struggling to survive in Korea with a challenge to boycott their company's Adidas Kingtex and Nike products.

I wish to subscribe to the Webspinner and wish you well in your endeavour.
Gertraud Kreiner, Whitecourt.

Congratulations!
Winnie Tomm, Calgary.

With what delight we olde spinsters (ar-ar!) became entangled in your arachnoid yarns. The threads are delicate, the network is strong.

Keep spinning!
Pauline Belanger and
Sheryl Ackerman, Edmonton.

Excellent work/very exciting!
Wendy Pike, Edson.

Having been involved with Calgary SWAC and also a bi-weekly newspaper, I know how much work must have gone into putting this out by typewriter, but it LOOKS SO GOOD - any chance you could keep it that way?
Diane Falck, Calgary.

Well done! It's got to continue.....
Henriette Douziech, Edmonton.

Dear Webspinner,

Congratulations for putting together an informative Woman's newsletter. It fulfills a real need in Alberta where there is a lot happening but nowhere to find out about it for the average person. I'm glad to see that you are accepting contributions from women interested in writing from their point of view - I hope to become a contributor.
Joanne Lynes, Edmonton.

Dear Mair

I'm very impressed with "Webspinner" You Edmonton women are very active and organized! (Some thing I wish I was better at being). I haven't got a lot of copies distributed yet but I'm hoping to do so.

In sisterhood,
Joan White Calf, Camrose.

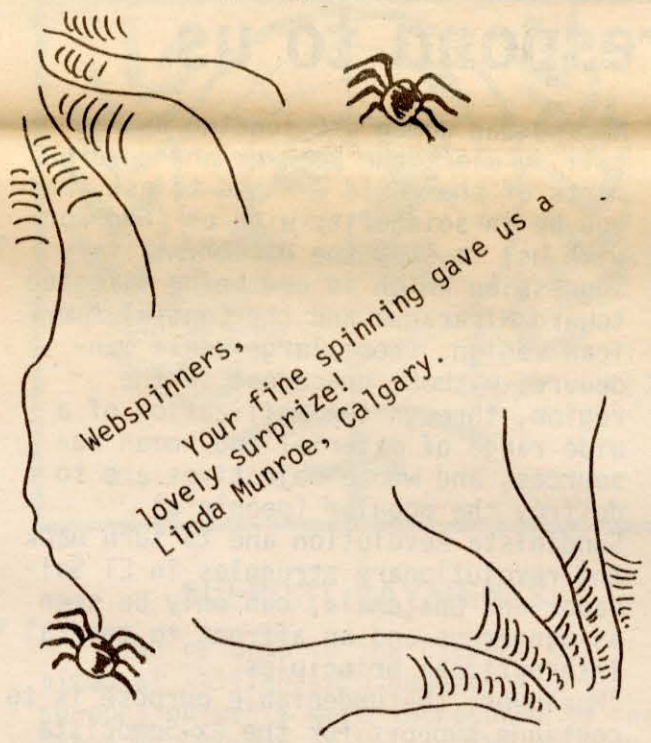
I'm really happy it all came together!
Claudette Reed-Upton, Calgary.

Dear Sisters of Webspinner-

How did you guess? I have always wanted to adopt a typesetter but NO-ONE has ever given me the opportunity before. Thanks for giving me the chance to do so and at the same time helping my sisters of Alberta through supporting the WEBSPINNER!

Many thanks, keep up the good work... and CONGRATULATIONS to you all on a most successful project

In sisterhood,
Amanda LeRougetel, Edmonton.

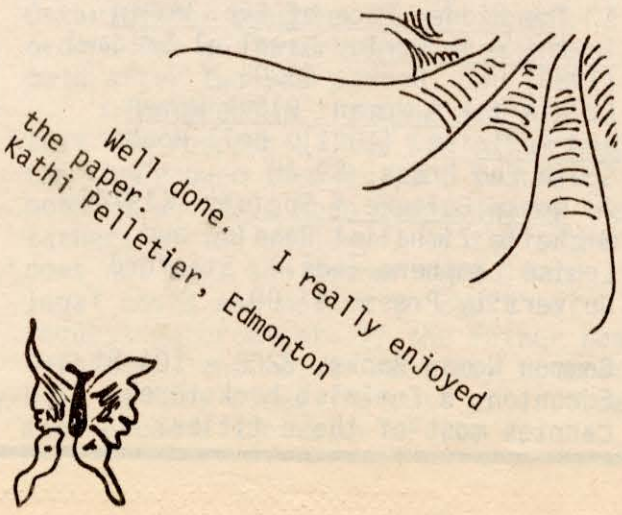


Dear Meaghan:

Congratulations on your first issue of Webspinner. I congratulate you all on the effort and dedication required to see a publication like this through all the necessary stages.

I was particularly interested in the articles on events in other parts of the world.

Sincerely,
Phyllis Ellis, Edmonton.



Dear Editor:

I am disappointed in Webspinner's, a publication which carries on its masthead Alberta Women's Newspaper.

If we are to have a women's newspaper, I would like to see a newspaper, not a newsletter or conglomeration of opinions. I'd like to see a legitimate paper for women in this province or in Canada, but I'd like to see a quality newspaper.

To begin with, I don't understand the choice of name for the paper. To me, spiders are not the most attractive of creatures and although they work hard, I cannot see any similarity between them and women. The front page is unprofessional and smacks of amateurism. It is the front page which draws readers to the issue, so this should be one place where professionalism should be a necessity. There is too much white space--the graphic is too large; the masthead should be typeset, and there should be a headline over the picture, as well as a cutline underneath. The picture is good but could be made quite a bit better if a person enlivened the scene. If it is necessary, shots like this should be set up. A person adds a human element to every picture.

The newspaper itself reads like a justification of a workshop. The headlines (or sections) "Our Process" and "Our Goals" merely further exaggerate this feeling.

You say you "rode a fine line" trying to allow for flexibility and a well-produced issue. Technically, I do not find it well produced. I also do not find it flexible. It seems to typecast women into yet another stereotype. It is a loosely woven collective of stories, not newspaper articles. I agree on a four-day production deadline. It is hard to produce a commercially viable newspaper but, if it is impossible, perhaps a longer time span should be considered, using workshops for the reason they were invented--to give people an introduction to the work. The actual newspaper should not be written at this time: People should be exposed to the problems and decide then if they can commit time to a production.

I find nothing new in this paper. I was hoping for more investigative work on daycare, rape and other women's issues. We have a crisis centre opening here--it would have made an excellent feature story for your first issue. I had also understood the paper would be reporting about women's problems with the law. I didn't see any of this.

I doubt the next issue will be much different because different people will be used and, therefore, the same problems will come up. Continuity is an important part of any publication.

If the type of newspaper were to change, I would consider writing for it in my spare time. However, at this time, I am not interested.
Sincerely
Janet Olsen, Grand Centre

Korean union brutalized

Willa Kernen, Seoul, Korea.

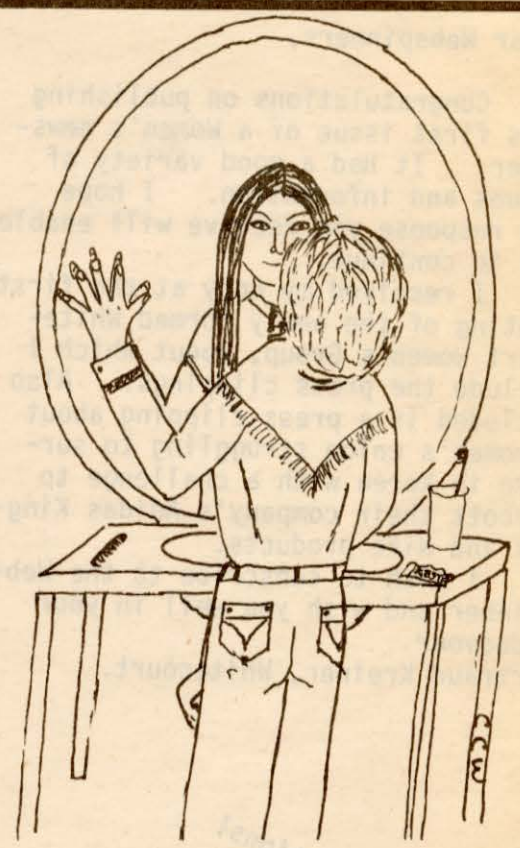
Perhaps the last vestige of a democratic labour union in Korea is at the Wonpoong Textile Company where the 700 of the 900 women employees have struggled valiantly to maintain their union. In efforts to destroy the union all its officers have been fired from the company without adequate reason. Male employees and outside thugs broke into the labour union office and broke up everything in sight, literally throwing out any of the women who were inside.

The union President, a petite 25 year old woman, was held in the office while the thugs forced her to kneel on the bare cement floor for 17 hours. They kicked her, struck her on the head and face, applied the infamous water torture (pouring water into a towel which completely covers nose and mouth until the victim almost drowns), and showered her with all kinds of abuse. They ate in front of her, but gave her not a bite. She lost consciousness several times, but did not give in to demands that she resign. At last, before daylight, they loaded her into a car and tossed her out on the roadside miles from home or factory in bare feet, her body covered with bruises and her face swollen beyond recognition. Passersby assumed her to be mad, and except for occasional murmurs of "the poor soul", paid little heed. When she recovered enough, she walked back to the factory in spite of bare feet and leg muscles numb from the hours of kneeling on cold cement.

The workers sat-in for days, doing their work, but not leaving the plant. Management closed the cafeteria and shut off the water, but the sit-in continued. Many passed out and were taken to hospital for treatment. When they were weak from lack of food and water, thugs dragged them out bodily, stacking them on the ground. The riot police were ordered to trample them but they refused. Some wept in sympathy.

The workers are now asking the Church around the world to boycott their products which include the Nike and Adidas running shoes and other Adidas products, and Kingtex products. You may like to join the boycott and tell others about it.

March 1983 United Church Magazine



By Andrea

The idea for Womantides grew from a need to hear from women (not just across Canada but also on the international level) to know what issues are of concern to women in other countries, and to see the essential similarities amongst us. Especially the root causes of violence against us as women. For example, Canada's Bill-44 shares a similar underlying cause with what women are suffering in Seoul, Korea.

By learning more of women's concerns on the international level, feelings of fear and isolation can be broken down amongst us and replaced with bonding and support for women everywhere.

The women's movement as a whole is strengthened by mutual gains and advances we can all share in our struggle against the patriarchy.

Nicaraguans respond to us

In the summer of '82, my aunt, Marg Ackerman, took greetings and donations from Every Woman's Place to the "Luisa Amanda Espinoza Association of Nicaraguan Women". She was part of a group (organized by CUSO and OXFAM) which toured the country. She personally met and established contact with the women's group mentioned above. They responded to our greetings in a telegram which reinforced the need for solidarity among women of the world.

Recently, they sent a telegram, the text of which is translated (thanks to Susan Beach and Joanne Kolmes) and printed below. It speaks for itself.

S. Ackerman

"In the very moments when the United States and Honduras are intensifying their efforts in a joint military operation named the 'First Great Step', Nicaraguan women are sending out a call to alert the peoples and governments of the world --- and to ask that you be in solidarity with us (and work with us) to stop the direct military aggression which is now being directed toward Nicaragua and the Central American region. These large-scale manoeuvres without precedent in the region, through the utilization of a wide range of material and human resources, and whose objectives are to destroy the popular (people's) Sandinista Revolution and to turn back the revolutionary struggles in El Salvador and Guatemala, can only be seen as dangerous and an affront to general international principles.

"Moreover, the undeniable purpose is to continue support for the ex-Somocista National Guard, which from Honduran

Cont'd p. 18

Women win vote

Another Swiss bastion of male supremacy fell Sunday as a referendum in the mountainous canton of Grisons, the country's largest province, gave women the right to vote in local elections.

By a margin of almost two to one, the poll approved a new voting law that will apply throughout the canton, overruling 13 villages which have stubbornly resisted female suffrage since women got the vote in federal elections in 1971.

The victory for women's rights left only the two Appenzell half-cantons, also in eastern Switzerland, blocking women's votes in local elections.

Calgary Herald

Suggested reading about global scene

Selected books and magazines for anyone interested in learning more about women in other countries.

1. Women's International Network News. WIN News, Fran P. Hosken, 187 Grant St. Lexington, Mass. 02173, U.S.A. This is a worldwide open communication system by, for and about women of all backgrounds, beliefs, nationalities, and ages.
2. OFF OUR BACKS. 1724 - 20 St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 2009, U.S.A. This is a good magazine for an international women's perspective.
3. This Bridge Called my Back: writings by radical women of color. Cherrie Moraga, Gloria Anzaldug (eds.), Persephone Press (1981). $9.95.
4. Women in a Violent Society. Calgary Status of Women Action Committee. Apply to Calgary SWAC office, #124, 320 - 5th Ave. S.E., Calgary, Alberta T2G 0E5. This is the proceedings from the 1978 Calgary conference on violence against women, with specific articles on women in other countries. $10.00 (negotiable).
5. The Hidden Face of Eve: Women in the Arab World. Nawal el Saadawi (1980) Dec. Books. $8.95.
6. Ain't I A Woman: Black Women - and Feminism. (1981). Bell Hooks. South End Press. $9.45.
7. Woman Culture & Society. (1974). Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (eds.). Stanford University Press. $7.00.

Common Woman Books, 8208 - 104 St., Edmonton, a feminist bookstore, carries most of these titles.

Hard to take . . . but true

PORN FOLLOW-UP

By Patricia Krasinski-Stansfield

After reading the ASWAC article on push-button porn in the last edition of 'Webspinner', I decided that here was an opportunity for ACTION. So I wrote five letters to the people suggested in the article on February 13. Well, here is the result.

Two people - Judy Erola and Francix Fox have not bothered to reply as yet. Mr. Trudeau's secretary replied, and made an interesting comment: "The (CRTC) Commission has made it clear, however, that it has no powers of censorship and that it is the obligation of the judiciary to define community standards pertaining to obscenity." She sent a copy of my letter to Mr. Meisel, and I also wrote to the CRTC suggesting that the Commission sue cases they think obscene so that the judges have the chance of forming precedents on this difficult subject of pornography.

It was nice to get a positive letter from Bill Wright, MP who wrote:

"Thank you for your letter of support regarding the issue of pornography.

"It is sad and demoralizing to watch the proliferation of this material but the silent majority are beginning to make their voices heard. Perhaps with continued public outrage the government will not continue to remain insensitive to the electorate on this issue.

"Your comments and support are greatly appreciated."

But what can readers make of the letter I received from 'Eatons' who deny any influence over the programming or direction of pay TV networks, thus evading the issue?

"The T. Eaton Company Limited has absolutely nothing to do with the production of television programs. The Eaton family has no ownership interest in First Choice Canadian Communications Corp. or Playboy Enterprises , or any other pay television networks.

"The First Choice Canadian Communications Corp. completely controls the programming of the shows for their pay television customers. Neither Glen-Warren Productions Limited, Baton Broadcasting Inc. or the Eaton family have any influence over the programming or direction of pay TV networks."

"WIMMIN ON SKIN WARPATH"

Porn is everywhere as the article below taken from the Edmonton Journal shows. However, the journalist does not seem to be taking the problem seriously.

Vancouver (CP)--Militant feminists are putting up a stink over skin magazines by dumping chicken droppings on Victoria newsstand shelves.

Three city centre shops were hit in surprise attacks Saturday and at least five other businesses have received threats of warnings from a group calling itself Angry Wimmin Rising.

"Somebody came in on the weekend and slit some garbage bags, dropping the evil smelling stuff on the magazines,' said Ian Lynch, manager of Market Square newsstand.

"The group has painted its name on our store front about five times recently and last week two women and a girl came in to ask me to stop selling pornography.

"They said if I didn't they could not be responsible for what might happen...we just sell things like Playboy, Penthouse, Hustler, nothing unusual."

Is writing letters ACTION? I think so. I think the Chairman of Canadian pay-television servies, Mr. Meisel, would really like in-put from women. Write to him at Ottawa K1A 0N2.

RIGHTS

A male employer's constant use of profanity, his calling a woman employee "tiger", and his suggestions that women workers should wear tight pants and T-shirts without bras did not constitute sexual discrimination, a board of inquiry set up by the Alberta Human Rights Commission has ruled.

The atmosphere at the Econo-Car rental office in Calgary, since closed, was more suited to "an all-male tavern or a lumber camp," said Thomas Walsh, a lawyer acting for the commission.

But he ruled that testimony from Edie Broda and Janice Howard did not substantiate charges of sexual discrimination against Bob Lemoignan, who fired the two women.

SUPPORT PAYMENTS

Two reforms to the Divorce Act aimed at stiffer enforcement of child support payments were introduced to the House of Commons in March. The reforms, introduced by Pat Carney, M.P. for Vancouver Centre, would permit the court enforcement of maintenance orders and allow courts to use Revenue Canada records to trace spouses who have defaulted on their payments.

Carney pointed out that nearly half of all single parent families headed by women in Canada live below the poverty line. A contributing factor, she said, is the lack of enforcement of court ordered maintenance payments for child support. In Ontario, for example, 75 per cent of orders for child maintenance are not paid after two years.

"The problem...," she added, "is that the responsibility for collecting the money owed them is left to the mothers who have been abandoned by the fathers of the children. If the father does not pay, the mother must incur legal costs and return to court to request enforcement. If the father has left town, the mother must try to trace him. In many cases the cost of enforcement exceeds the value of the order."

PROSTITUTION

A United Nations report released Thursday urges a world-wide war on prostitution, an effort it said was as important as fighting drugs and racism.

The report was issued in response to a resolution in May by the UN Economic and Social Council.

Drafted by French diplomat Jean Fernand-Laurent, the 74-page document said: "Confined in the bondage of prostitution, women and children await their liberation."

"This fight is as necessary as the fight against racism. It must be waged by the international community with the same perseverance and the same effectiveness."

To combat prostitution, the report said, international action "should be organized immediately in order to establish exchanges of reliable information, to familiarize people with the tactics of procurers, to identify the networks they use and to pool the experience States have already acquired in the field of prevention and rehabilitation."

The report, which provided no global statistics, said that "contrary to an opinion that is too widespread, prostitution is not the oldest profession" and was still unknown in many so-called "primitive" societies.

Calgary Herald

INVISIBLE

One March evening in Calgary a woman phoned police to report her husband was becoming violent and that he had a gun. She waited and no police showed. She called again and was told they'd get there as soon as they could. She waited ...and waited. Finally, she and her two children fled to the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter.

Shortly after she arrived at the shelter, the shelter received a phone call from the husband who threatened to shoot the place up. The shelter called police and moved everyone upstairs. All the downstairs lights were turned off, the curtains drawn and everyone inside waited...and waited.

Meanwhile, back at the northwest Calgary trailer park residence of the husband, a neighbor called police to report he heard shots fired inside the home. As the police pulled up to the house, the man was getting into his car with a gun. A high speed chase ensued, punctuated by the man ramming a police paddywagon with his car. The man was then charged with "a weapons offence."

Besides the fact that police did not respond quickly until after shots had been fired, local media made no mention of the woman's ordeal. They reported only the shots fired, the high speed chase, the precious paddywagon having been rammed and the subsequent weapons charge. Only those aspects of the incident which occurred outside the home and posed possible danger to the public were dealt with by police and media.

Victory for lesbian moms

Herstory in the making

By Mary

In November 1982, in a landmark decision, a 38 year old lesbian was awarded custody of her two and a half year old granddaughter. This victory is a milestone for lesbians country -wide, as it is the first time custody has been awarded to a homosexual who is not one of the child's natural parents.

After having temporary custody for almost 18 months under an agreement of unspecified duration which was signed by both natural parents, Marge, the grandmother (not her real name), brought the issue up for review with her daughter and son-in-law.

Marge's daughter fully supported her mother's application for permanent custody. She evaluated the stable, loving home of Marge and her lover of ten years as the most suitable atmosphere for her child to grow in. The child's father, however, was determined to seek custody himself.

"Marge would best facilitate a life for a child."

The presiding judge, Philip Collings, of the British Columbia Family Court, stated early in his decision. "If all considerations to the child's interests were equal (the child) should go to (the father)." As the trial unfolded, it became clear that awarding custody to Marge would best facilitate a happy, healthy life for her.

The first ruling made by Judge Colling was that since the father had consented to Marge's temporary custody of the child for 18 months, the court would view the case as a custody dispute rather than a general application for custody.

As the judge held the presumption that the best interests of the child require that she go to her natural father, it became Marge's and her lover Brenda Kaine's task to refute this. Marge's lesbianism was one of the first issues to be ruled on. Four cases were cited: Case vs Case (Saskatchewan) K vs K (Alberta) B vs B (Ontario) and D vs D (Ontario). All these cases "are unanimous in judging that homosexuality is not a bar to a claim for custody, but is a factor to be considered with all the others. In other words, it is a question of fact rather than law, how far the particular homosexual relationship in question relates to the best interest of the particular child," explained Judge Collings. "At the least.... a homosexual relationship is a minus factor for a custody claimant," he said.

Evidence from the Family Court Counsellor and the case of B vs B which indicated the sexual preference of the custodial parent doesn't dictate the sexual identity of the child was then cited. Collings held that "common sense dictates that a child is brought up with a view to the norms of the society in which she resides. Homosexuality is not a norm in our society-it is abnormal. If it were an accepted norm we wouldn't be arguing about it." Although he judged that living without a role model of a normal heterosexual relationship held dangers, he felt the evidence didn't map out for him " the nature or extent of the dangers". In conclusion he decided to assess Marge's lesbianism in relation to the five factors outlined in Section 24(1) of the BC Family Relations Act. This decision was a key ingredient in ensuring the fair appraisal of Marge's parenting ability.

"Five factors influenced decision."

The assessment was as follows:

Factor 1. The health and emotional well-being of the child including any special needs for care and treatment.

The child was healthy but mildly asthmatic. The judge found it hard to predict which claimant would contribute more to the child's emotional well-being in the future.

Factor 2. Where appropriate, the views of the child.

Was not appropriate in the case.

Factor 3. The love, affection and similar ties that exist between the child and other persons.

It was recognised that, while the child had ties to both claimants, the nature of the ties differed. The ties to Marge and her lover were "ties to the home". The judge pointed out here that Marge's lover had actually been "more of the mother figure, had done more of the down to earth, day to day things which really count for a child". He hoped and trusted that he was justified in relying on the stability of the relationship between Marge and her lover.

The ties to the father were noted as "those of a child to a visiting parent." It was also noted that the father shied away from personal contact with his daughter. Rather than spending time with her he took her to the movies or to visit friends. The judge saw "a reluctance to come to grips with her as a person, to realize what sharing your life with a growing child would mean."

Factor 4. Education and training for the child.

The judge felt it was obvious that the child "would turn out to be a totally different sort of adult being brought up by Marge rather than her father. He mentioned Marge's lesbianism, the effects of which he couldn't quantify but felt, even so, that he was "quite happy with the education and training" the child would receive in Marge's home. He expressed concern that the father had stated his ability to teach the child "how to cope on the street." He questiones the father's anticipation for the child.

Factor 5. The capacity of each person....to exercise these rights and duties (of custody) adequately. (In other words, the capacity to provide a stable and supportive home for the child.)

The judge expressed "profound misgivings" about both of the claimants. He decided instead to look at what they had each learned from their histories and how they had presently established themselves.

Marge, in his opinion, was the far better choice. Within the past few years she had finished her education, established a stable home and had her son living with her. In addition she had assumed responsibility for her granddaughter and "made an excellent job of it." He summed Marge up as "a stable, mature person, well able to exercise the rights and duties of custody". The only shadow was "the possible effects of the homosexual household in the future." He had stated several times earlier that this was not a measurable entity.

"Mother-figure needed."

In respect to the father he found him to be "transparently an easy-going, likable man." However, he also found him disorganized, not properly settled down and younger than his years (mid-twenties). His employment record was poor and his future possibilities unreliable. The father's support services were also poor. He was not seen as being personally fitted to cope with raising a child, in the sense of acting in view of a mother. Although the father started living with a women during the trial, the judge felt that as she was the "breadwinner" this position would "cramp her style as a mother." The judge's "bottom line" was that an on-the-spot, in-house mother figure was needed. The father could not provide one.

In summation, the judge found that Marge had satisfactorily rebutted the presumption that a return of the child to the father was in her best interests. He did not order a review and it was his view that the custody orders should be designed as permanent. The father was given reasonable access to the child, with liberty to apply to the courts in the case of difficulty.

The case is being appealed. We hope a higher court will share our sense that Judge Collings thoroughly and responsibly weighed the evidence on both sides. For now, we're celebrating an important new vindication of our right to parent.

From Grapevine, Spring 1983. Vancouver Lesbian Mothers Defence Fund.

Off Our Backs

LESBIAN MOTHERS UNITE

Large as life

And the facts about fat

By Kate Partridge

Every day, in magazines, on television, and in the movies, women are confronted by the visual image of 'the contemporary woman'. This image defines how women are supposed to look, and also implies that this is how most women do look. Because this female image is always slim, it can come as a considerable surprise to discover the large percentage of 'overweight' women in the general population.

The most recent Canadian survey (Nutrition Canada, 1975) revealed the following statistics:

Women 20 - 39 years old
44% 'overweight' or more, 10% of these 'obese'
Women 40 - 64 years
68% 'overweight' or more, 25% of these 'obese'
Women 65 years plus
80% 'overweight' or more, 40% of these 'obese'

This is a lot of women who are not at the 'normal' or 'average' weight. Especially in the oldest age group, one is driven to wonder what the meaning of 'normal' or 'average' weight can be, given that 80% of the population is above it.

There is incredible social pressure on 'overweight' women to become slim. The three primary sources of this pressure are: aesthetic - our current cultural stereotype for beauty is thin, if not skeletal; medical - there is a correlation between obesity and an increased incidence of other physical disorders which is interpreted as a causal relationship; moral - it is considered morally wrong to be fat because it is taken to signify either a weak will and a lack of self control, or a wilful disregard of social values.

"There is incredible social pressure to become thin."

Thus the fat woman must bear the stigma of a stereotype that labels her as ugly, unhealthy, and morally weak, not to mention greedy, lazy, stupid, of absent or exaggerated sexuality, and fit only to be a mother figure and listener; a fun-loving clown and an observer, but not an active participant in life.

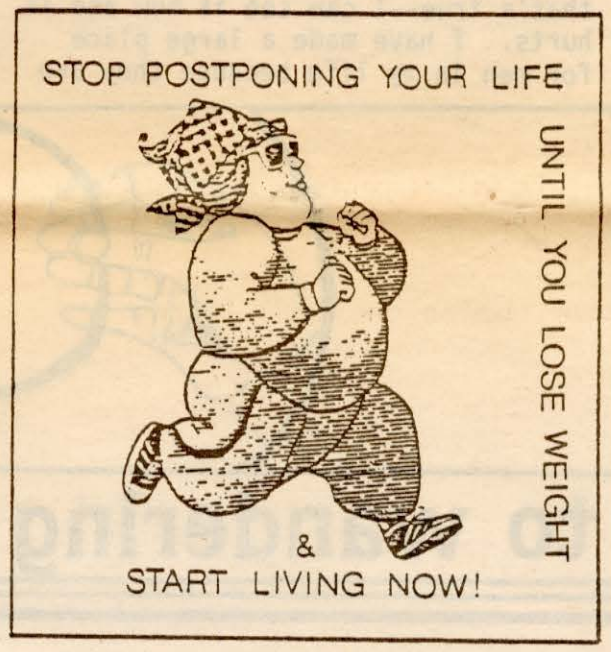
"No other physical characteristic except skin color is so stigmatized in our society" (Dr. Judith Rodin in The American Psychologist, 1981, Vol. 36). This stigma is actively expressed in various forms of very real discrimination in the social and employment fields.

Clearly, no one consciously wants to be fat, given all these penalties. Women spend amazing amounts of time, emotional energy and money in avoiding this fate (some will even choose the risk of cancer over being fat, by smoking to decrease their appetites). Many women are preoccupied with the belief that their lives will improve dramatically--once they become slim. Behind all this frantic and anxious activity is the basic assumption that weight-loss is possible.

Thus the facts about weight loss can be very threatening to these women. It is well-documented over years of research that, while temporary weight loss is relatively easy to achieve, only 5% of the overweight population can maintain a weight loss of at least 20 lbs. for two years or more. In other words, 95% of overweight people will never get slim, often in spite of endless and repeated attempts. Any other physical disorder with a success rate of 5% would probably be considered incurable, and yet we go on behaving as though something can be done to lose weight permanently.

"95% of overweight people will never get slim"

Several recent large-scale studies have found that 'overweight' is not nearly the risk to health that it was once considered. but even if it were, we must begin to realize that the constant nagging and pressurizing of fat women to become slim serve only to increase their stress and anxiety in the face of an impossible task, given our present technology.



If weight loss is not a reasonable goal for many fat women, what is? In my opinion, the most urgent task facing the fat woman is learning to overcome the consequences of the social stigma of obesity. This stigma is far more damaging to fat women, both physically and emotionally, than is the fatness per se. This is because it teaches the fat woman to reject herself, and to hate and dissociate from her body.

Large as Life is a volunteer association that was established in order to help fat women learn to like themselves and accept their bodies, and to educate the public about obesity in order to eliminate the stigma. Large as Life was founded in Vancouver in June of 1981, and a chapter has recently been started in Calgary. The group's motto is: Stop postponing your life until you lose weight and start living now!

One of the major activities of the group is to set up and promote special fitness classes for fat women only, with fat women as instructors wherever possible. (The Calgary Board of Education has been running a Large as Life fitness class since January of this year.) The goal of these fitness classes is increased body awareness and acceptance, and improved cardiovascular endurance, suppleness and strength, all aspects of fitness that are independent of weight loss.

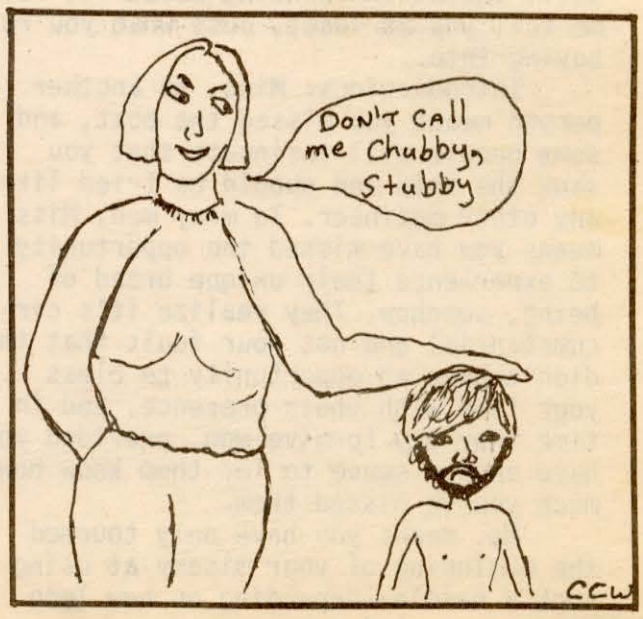
Another major area of concern for the group is personal appearance and self-presentation, since these are the triggers for the social feedback that influences how we feel about ourselves. A major problem for fat women has been the difficulty in finding attractive clothing in their size, since retailers and manufacturers seem to be unaware that fat women make up at least 25% of their market. Large as Life is in the process of analyzing data from 4000 questionnaires that appeared in the Canadian Living magazine in August 1982.

These will provide information about the extent and range of fashion problems large women have, and will be used to lobby the clothing industry to do a better job in this area. Large as Life also sponsors such events as personal development workshops and fashion shows, where fat women learn that they can look great and feel confident regardless of their size. This emphasis on physical appearance is a way of 'fighting fire with fire'. In the social and working worlds of the majority of fat women, the fat woman who presents herself as attractive and confident is making a political statement that counteracts the prevailing negative stereotype.

"Fighting fire with fire"

Large as Life also publishes a monthly newsletter, and has monthly meetings. In Calgary, these meetings are held on the last Wednesday of the month, except for July and August, at the Memorial Park Branch Library, at 7 p.m. Discussion topics have included "The Psychology and Politics of Obesity" and "Body Image, Sexuality and the Large Woman". The next meeting (May 25) will feature a talk by U of C psychology professor Dr. Lorna Cammaert on "Feminism and the Large Woman".

Large as Life will soon become a registered non-profit society in Alberta. The group is hoping that other sister groups will be formed in the province, and welcomes inquiries. For information: Large as Life, 1221 Bowness Rd. N.W., Calgary, Alta. T2N 3J6, 283-9281.



Feminist or foe?

By Rose Hamel

Feminist or foe? I'd never considered myself either one until I became friendly with several women deeply involved with the Women's Movement. Up until I met these women I had not felt that I had run into a great deal of male opposition while in pursuit of a career and my own happiness. I realize now that I had run into male opposition but did not recognize it as such so I simply redirected my energies into something more easily attainable for women, attained it, and thought I had won. I am sad for myself that I had been blind to the problem women are experiencing, not just in finding their own happiness, but in retaining their sanity in an insane male-oriented world.

How could I have missed the pain women are experiencing all day, every day, for most of their lives. It was easy because I felt that I was happy with my home, career and mate I automatically assumed all women were happy. The truth is that a lot of women are happy only because they feel they have achieved all that is attainable (or allowed) to them. I am happy with a home life, but so many women who are not happy stick with it simply because they feel that being a housewife is the only option they have.

Even though I am very new to the Women's Movement, I feel justified in what I have said concerning the unhappiness of women in the home. The reason for this being that I stepped into the Women's Movement with an open but uninformed mind, took my first close look at us women and saw what I had once perceived as women in happy situations crumble before my eyes. I have also learned that women who are not happy with their present situations do have other options available to them. These options are available because women like my friends here at Webspinner and various other places are constantly battling old myths about woman's role in society--and they are winning. I have also found that not all the doors to the business world are open to women but we do have a foot in the door. As for the doors that remain closed, we will just have to keep on knocking, banging and finally, destroying them, as they represent barriers to our achievements.

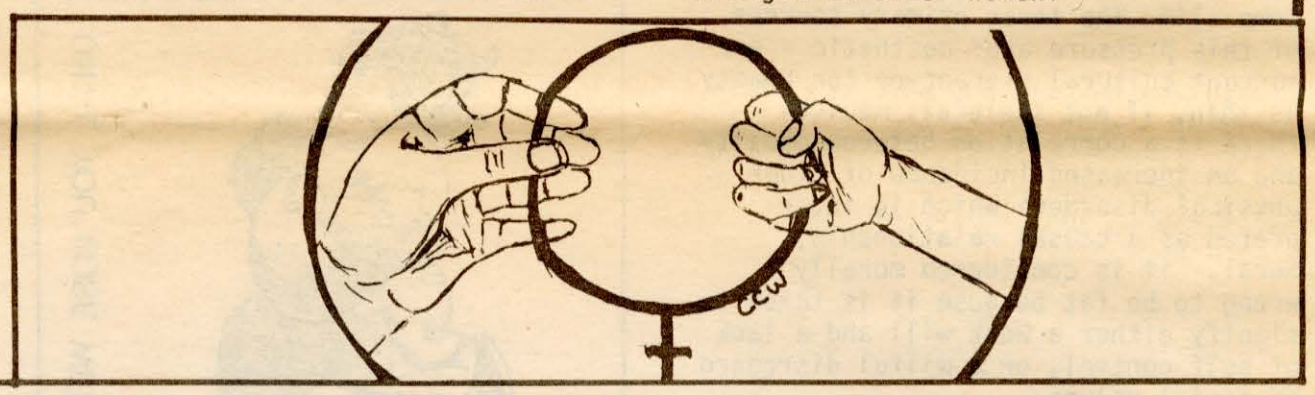
I am confident that in the future if I should run into any of these doors that they will eventually be opened to me and all women for several reasons. One reason being that I know now that I can fight for my right to be there; the second being that I know the Women's Movement is always ready to support a sister in realizing her goals; and finally, something very important to me, I have a mate beside me who supports me--and tells me so.

Another point that the Women's Movement has made me aware of is that there are so few men willing to stand side by side with women. I know that's true--I can see it now and it hurts. I have made a large place for men in my life because they are important to me and to suddenly realize that so many of them have clay feet is very painful. I made a space for them so why do they find it so difficult to share their space with me?

So there you have it. Feminist or foe? Certainly not foe, as I have grown to respect the Women's Movement too much to oppose it. Feminist? It's hard to say I support every aspect of it but I do know that it has crept into my life in some very positive ways. One way it has made itself known is by way of humor. Jokes about women that I once thought of as funny no longer are. With my new awareness they seem to have gone from funny to humiliating. I have a lot to learn and with my new knowledge I find an anger in me that is growing at an alarming pace. I'm afraid.

I am so afraid that I almost want to go back to being the narrow, uninformed person that I once was. I would be safe--I would also be defeated.

I hope that by sharing my feelings with you I can draw enough strength from your support to help me carry on learning and growing as an independent woman. I think that if I can carry on I may someday be able to start contributing my own strength to other women.



Warning to wandering witches

By Diane McKnight

Women--don't be single. I see some of you weren't listening. I'll try again...Women! Don't be single! If you still insist on thinking about it, let me tell you at least, just what you're buying into...

Introductions: Miss, to another person means you missed the boat, and some people will insinuate that you sank the ship and should be tried like any other mutineer. To many men, Miss means you have missed the opportunity to experience their unique brand of being, somehow. They realize it's circumstantial and not your fault that they didn't have an opportunity to bless your life with their presence, and in time they may forgive you, provided you have enough sense to let them know how much you've missed them.

Ms. means you have only touched the beginning of your misery at using such a handle--depending on how long you've used it. But at least you have the consolation of knowing a moment of freedom before you dropped your bomb. You didn't know you dropped a bomb? You don't see Msses on washroom doors, now do you? You don't usually see WOMEN for that matter. I notice a lot of sticks, circles and triangles for skirts these days. They say a picture's worth...Duck when the ammunition gets nastier than barbed insults.

Mrs. means that people understand that you will come to your senses shortly and go back to him. Or if he's really abusive, you'll switch to a new one.

Accommodations: Living at home means you will have your decisions made for you. You are somebody's daughter, and nobody's wife. You have nothing important to do obviously, or you wouldn't be puttering about the house. So naturally you will be taking responsibility for helping the family. Sis needs a break from the kids, Mom doesn't like to drive, etc.

Living with a roommate means that when she has her boyfriend over she would appreciate it if you would disappear for awhile, while you would appreciate him disappearing for more than awhile after he's used up the fourth roll of toilet paper in two weeks. If by chance she has no boyfriend, but you do...Have you ever heard of the tendency to homeostasis? How about friction?

Living alone: are you weird or something? No one lives alone. (Your landlord will make sure of it. Same goes for the landlady.) I see: you purchased a double lock. You must be up to something, since no one stays alone. What weird wild things do you do in the dark? Visitors tonight? Are you in the...ah...you know...that certain profe-ssion? A DIFFERENT profession? Who do you think you are, you stuck-up rich bitch--share the wealth!

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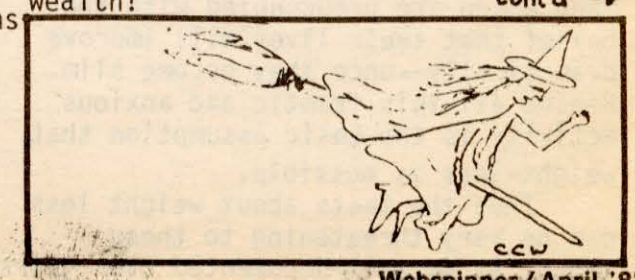

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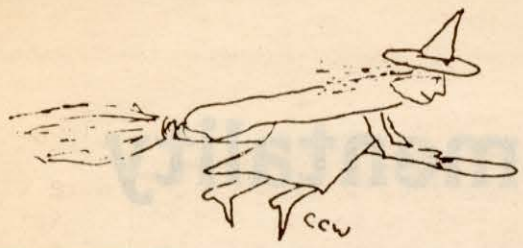
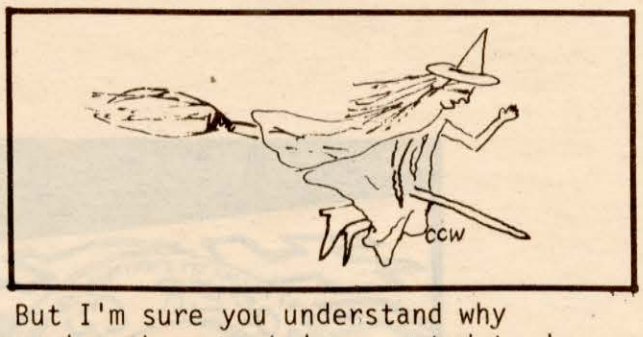


Living in a residence or a dormitory: Well, everyone always knew you were a man hater. You're probably adopted too. Wayward orphan--no morals, no roots and no real feelings.

Employment: You don't need a job --you need a man. Still looking anyway? Well, you don't need much --minimum wage will suffice? Dependents, you say? Business isn't a welfare agency--go to welfare, my dear. They want you to find work? Try a man's job, it pays better. What d'you mean you can't lift a hundred pounds? What d'you mean you need training? Oh...I see...you have some training, but not enough...experience. Listen dear, you're overqualified--you wouldn't be happy here...

Recreation: You can't leave us now! This has to be done by...sure...I could ask Loretta and take her away from her supper, kids and husband.

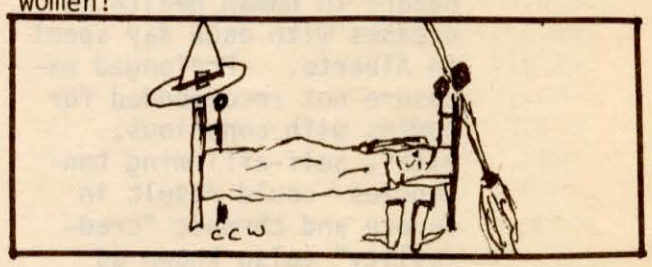


But I'm sure you understand why you're the one who's expected to do overtime, don't you? Be a good girl!

Socializing: Do you put out to every Tom, Dick and Harry or are you a nun? Nonsense, you have to be one or the other. Who are you trying to kid? Everyone knows you're a desperate nymphomaniac or frigid and we're determined to find out which, because ...it's not natural to be so private... and so...secretive! By the way, I'll set you up with Larry Wishbone on Friday night. You'll like him, he's just your type--he's single (except when he stays with his ex-wife for the weekend).

Got a female friend? Good friend? Goody--now I have some of the juiciest gossip in town for my blackmail files.

Don't ever say I didn't warn you, women!



Blisters for Peace

By Nola Erhardt

For Clare Edington, feminist and protester for peace, there are some memories of her anti-cruise trek from Cold Lake to Edmonton that she will always treasure.

And there are some memories she may want to forget.

"The pain," she says. "I'm kind of allergic to pain."

Twenty-six year old Clare, an unemployed artist from Edmonton, joined the protest walk almost on impulse, walked part way, and rode part way in a wheelchair. She learned a lot about cruise missiles, basked a little in the admiration of supporters along the route, and developed a real sense of cameraderie with the other protestors.

She also endured the pain of horrible blisters and swollen calves, feelings of loneliness and isolation, and frustration at the attempted hierarchical organization of the event by some members of the march.

She says now she really didn't know what she was getting into back then.

"I just thought about the peace march and thought about going but really never gave it a lot of thought."

Two days before the event, she took the plunge and caught a ride to Cold Lake. The decision was a little intimidating.

"It was almost culture shock to be in a demonstration like that with a bunch of people I really didn't know," she says, and adds, "I read a book the whole way up."

When she relaxed, she began to talk to people, and to realize that she was the only feminist on the march. She experienced some trepidation when it occurred to her that although she was sympathetic to the peace movement, there might not be one person there sympathetic to the women's movement.

The group's arrival at Cold Lake did little to lift her spirits, as she expected a number of peace protesters to greet them, and there was only the press waiting in the cold.

The Cold Lake send-off was uneventful, and the group waited until Grande Centre for their first boost to morale. There, a youth group performed a play on cruise missiles for them, and Clare says she was touched.

"It was really neat to see it. I think they decided to do it on their own."

The next day they set out on the 15-mile hike they had agreed to do each day, and the magnitude of the event hit Clare.

"I suddenly realized as I was marching that the fact that they want to test cruise missiles in Alberta is a crisis now, and I can work with people I don't necessarily agree with to protest it," she says, referring to the dissent that was already forming within the group.

"There were certain men there who tried to organize people--tell them how to walk and when to walk and what to do--and it really wasn't necessary."

Along with that concern their first full day on the road, came a problem more pressing. Her feet were beginning to blister.

"I started to really feel a lot of pain. I kept thinking it would be hard the first few days and it would get better. But by the end of the second day I could hardly walk," she remembers. "My blisters were so sore and I was crying."

The solutions for both problems came with the aid of the group. For her feet, they bought her a pair of new boots in Bonnyville, and she was able to continue walking. For her objections on being commanded by a few order-conscious men, she enlisted the support of several other women on the march. The women began to heckle the men "whenever they decided to do their authoritarian number on us."

She says she tried to voice her objections with a sense of humor and as gently as possible, but "what they were doing was totally unacceptable to me and politically incorrect."

Not everything was unhappy those first few days. The group was beginning to come together as they walked, singing and hunting for the coffee shops that meant liquids and washrooms--"an oasis", says Clare

"There was a special kind of love that formed between the people that walked," Clare remembers, and smiles when she recalls, "I taught them a lot of Ferron songs and women's songs."

They were also starting to get some response from people along the road--about 87% favorable, 13% indifferent and 3% negative, Clare estimated. Some people brought them cookies, and one farmer brought fresh milk.

Also, some of the work was being shared collectively, and Clare felt good about that.

One protester contributed his knowledge on massage, something Clare appreciated when, on the eighth day of the twelve-day walk, she was forced into a wheelchair.

Remembering why I'm here

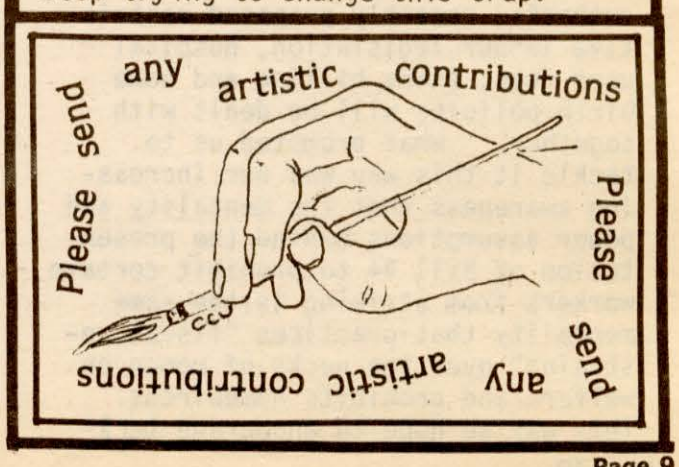
By Clare Edington

Sometimes, during the long hours and with lack of space and time pressures, a lot of conflicts arise among the women here. I wonder why I am giving all this energy into putting out a women's newspaper. I think, what's the use--we don't even know how to work together. We understand so little about collectivity.

Monday night, at 12:00 midnight, I am sitting doing the graphics. I am so tired. I have worked all the enamel off my teeth. Then one of the women comes into check if I am okay because a man with a knife has raped 4 women tonight. One of them is her sister.

All of a sudden I remember my rapes. I remember centuries of abuse and degradation. I remember all women who have been crushed by this patriarchal shit. And nothing women do to each other can even begin to touch the violence that men inflict upon women.

All of a sudden I remember why I am here. And why I will never stop trying to change this crap.



FEATURE

ALBERTA A HEALTH HAZARD

The "grey eminence" mentality

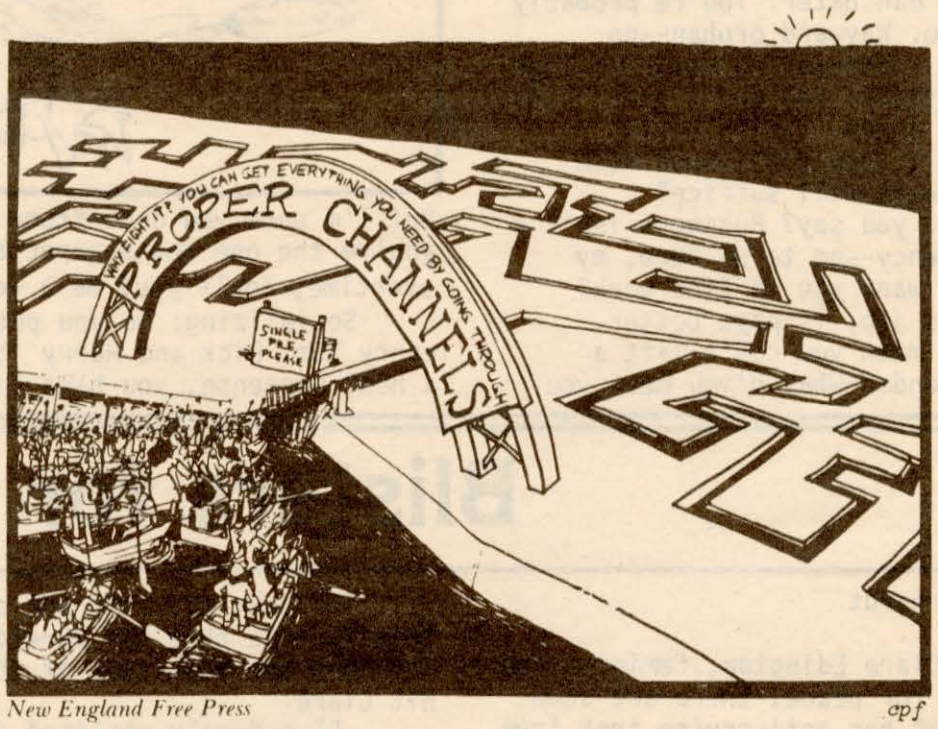
By Meaghan Dean and Mair.

Warning: The Goddess warns that the hazard to human health increases with each day spent in Alberta. Prolonged exposure not recommended for humans with conscious, vital, self-affirming tendencies--could result in severe and chronic "credibility" (also known as sleepwalking).

The basic decisions involved in figuring out what you're going to do about Alberta's political and economic afflictions are similar to those involved in pondering whether to quit smoking. You can simply pursue the illusion of health by trading one form of addiction for another (stop smoking and start munching Twinkies by the case) or you can tackle the root addiction by making a life-choice.

Operating on this assumption that the basic choice involved over any addiction or situation we sense is unhealthy for us is one of deciding whether we essentially want to live fully or die, and not of selecting a new symbol for the old addiction or sickness, we are looking at some recent actions of the Alberta powers -that-be from an environmental perspective.
These actions will be considered not as isolated, separate incidents, but as a connected collection of symptoms produced by an underlying sickness in our total environment. By environment, we mean not only the physical but the emotional, mental and spiritual, from which we create our present economic, political and social "realities".

Specifically, social services cutbacks, recently proposed restrictive labour legislation, hospital user fees, extra billing and home birth policies will be dealt with together. What prompted us to tackle it this way was our increasing awareness that the mentality and power assumptions behind the presentation of Bill 44 to prohibit certain workers from striking is the same mentality that practices "fiscal restraint" over the necks of women on welfare and prohibits homebirths. This way we hope to encourage tackling the root of the problem of, say, the labour legislation, namely, the mentality and power assumptions from which it sprang. We also feel this way of looking at the situation can open up a whole new set of choices on how to deal with it-- choices based on our terms and our lives rather than the narrow, manipulative terms of those perpetuating the sickness. And, who knows what power we may find through this...



New England Free Press *cpf*

So, let's look at some of the parts of our environment here in Alberta right now. While there've been many discussions lately about the inherent contradictions (environmental disease/hospital user fees; home birth policy/hospital user fees (home death policy?); high unemployment/social services cutbacks, etc., here the intention is to home in more on the inherent similarities in the "grey eminence" mentality.

-Paternalism. "We know best what's good for you."
-Buck passing. "Not my jurisdiction". This leads to
-Divide and confuse. "Go take your concerns somewhere else".
-Denial of personal experience. "No, the Lodgepole blowout isn't making you sick - It's your imagination, and that goes for your 3 month old baby too."
-Insensitivity. "We can't see you, we can't hear you" (and of course -
-Blaming. "And that's your fault.")
-Death of democracy. Yes you can make presentations and protests about the new labour laws; we'll give you a whole 7 days in which to prepare, and we get to say who speaks. If for instance we think you might be controversial (eg. the Alberta Human Rights and Civil Liberties Association we will not hear you. This is participatory democracy, because we say it is. You see, we also have
-Divine right to rule. The people of Alberta gave us a clear mandate, so we can do anything".
-and it's scary foster-brother Dualism "Right and wrong are absolutes, and we, of course, decide what's right.
-and their overwhelming step-father Patriarchy "Male" values are the right and only values--competition, conflict, violence, rape (earth, women, children) and exploitation (people, human values, 'women's' values eg. caring, shared power, cooperation, non-exploitation.)

There are more of course, add your own list, make your own connections. But, I believe, they all boil down to one thing--too narrow an understanding of power and responsibility. Grey eminences "take" power and "assume" responsibility. This breeds the lie that the rest of us willingly and after true negotiation have given up power and responsibility--but the lie is coming home to roost. Systems break down, evolution occurs, the world changes--and those who have "taken power and responsibility" are aware of losing control; so they dig in their heels, lean more heavily on the rest of us, listen to us even less, and squeeze out more of our life.

We can choose not to believe the lie--where would that leave us?

Well, living, breathing, loving, working women in Alberta, I Guess! Part of the environment --aware of our power and responsibility, our values and our individual and collective goals.

I've observed many "ways of being" among women I've worked with--here are a few--add your own. And, though my personal biases show, I believe that a rich and varied society needs all, and I do not intend to write judgementally.

1. Overwhelmed "I'm unable to do anything to stop the "grey eminence" machine. I'm out of control of

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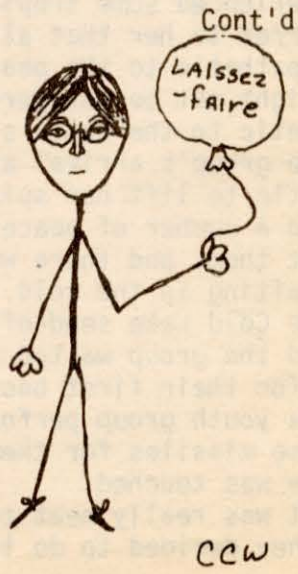


Labor law new low

If Bill 44 is passed, Alberta will have the dubious distinction of having the most repressive, restrictive labour legislation in Canada. Introduced in the Legislature by Alberta Labor Minister Les Young, April 12, the proposed bill would abolish the right to strike for provincial government employees, nurses and other hospital workers, firefighters and anyone working under contract with the provincial government. The larger unions no longer permitted to strike would include the United Nurses of Alberta (UNA), the Alberta Union of Public Employees (AUPE), and the Alberta Firefighters Association (AFA).

In addition to abolishing the strike process, Bill 44 would "tighten up" arbitration procedures to the point where arbitrators will be forced to include government-dictated factors in their deliberations. This means a significant loss of the independent and impartial elements of the arbitration process.

Alberta liquor board employees will be exempted from the right to strike clauses of the legislation. It is possible the government made this concession because the poor state of liquor workers' labor relations has been cited to the International Labor Organization (ILO) as an example of Alberta's unfairness to labor. An agency of the United Nations, the ILO has twice censured the Alberta government for banning all public sector strikes by claiming they are essential services.

While the government maintains limiting strikes is necessary to keep public sector wage settlements from exceeding those in the private sector, statistics show that most private-sector settlements in Calgary and Edmonton during 1982 were higher than public sector settlements, even in non-union firms. As for the government's proposed "rigging" of arbitration in its favor, it is no secret that the government, including Premier Peter Lougheed, has expressed displeasure over some recent arbitration awards to government employees.

The insult-to-injury for many about Bill 44 was the process

Cont'd p. 12

ALBERTA JUDICIARY HAZARDOUS

Judge's view ominous sign

By RaeAnn Robertson

Recent statements by Chief Justice William McGillivray of the Alberta Supreme Court of Appeal are yet another ominous warning that living in Alberta is hazardous to our health. He was responsible for halving the eight-year sentence of a convicted rapist as a result of an appeal. Everyone is aware of the general substance of the controversy surrounding the judge's given reasons for his decision. Essentially, he stated that a woman who goes home with a man to smoke marijuana and drink beer shouldn't be surprised if she gets raped. It indicates McGillivray's mistaken belief that this woman is somehow responsible for her own brutal violation. Concerned women all over the province are up in arms over the anti-woman tone of these remarks. We are outraged that a member of an institution as powerful as the provincial judiciary has demonstrated such a grave misunderstanding of the nature of sexual assault. We recognize that anyone convicted of a crime is entitled to due process of law, but with statements like those of this judge, one wonders just whose side the law is on.

The tendency to blame the victim of a sexual assault is a common one. Men and women often belive that women somehow provoke such attacks. This is quite simply untrue. The implications of Justice McGillivray's remarks are that the woman had a degree of complicity in her rape. That this kind of attitude can be expressed with impunity by men in important positions of power is despicable. But until women are successful in changing the attitudes of such men, which is in fact, changing the attitudes of society, we will find little protection in the law.

Media misquote excuse dies a deserving death

When Alberta Chief Justice William McGillivray's sexist comments during a recent rape appeal case were made public, many McGillivray defenders, including ALberta Attorney General Neil Crawford, attempted to sweep the matter under the judicial carpet by screaming "media misquote".

For several days McGillivray defenders tut-tutted the critics by reminding that no one has the right to question a judge's opinion and definitely has no right to do so based on a few lines reported in a newspaper. However, the misquote excuse died a quick death when publication of the "memorandum of agreement" was published, which showed that the judge had been quoted both fairly and accurately. The memorandum was written by Chief Justice McGillivray himself and the following is the pertinent excerpt in its entirety:

"We think the circumstances were such that it would not have been surprising to that young woman that something might well happen to her going up to the man's apartment between two and three o'clock in the morning, having been drinking beer all evening, with the expressed intention of smoking marijuana and drinking more beer. That, however, is not an answer to his using violence when she rejected his overtures, but we think it is a very different situation from the rapist who breaks into somebody's home and attacks them or who picks somebody off the street."

"No" often means "maybe", says Alta. judge

Stating that in his estimation in politics and love "no" often means "maybe", an Alberta Court of Queen's Bench justice sentenced a man to six months for assaulting his common-law wife.

Samuel Jacobsen was on trial for attempted murder in Edmonton before Court of Queen's Bench Justice Michael O'Byrne. The court was told the man had been arrested for attempting to rape the woman's 10-year-old daughter. It was while out on bail on this charge that the incident for which Jacobsen was charged with attempted murder occurred.

The woman's 13-year-old son testified he awoke to find the man climbing through a window. After calling the police, the youth said he went into the woman's bedroom to find Jacobsen kneeling on the bed choking her and "she looked like she had fainted". The youth grabbed the man in a headlock and upon releasing the woman, Jacobsen went into the bathroom and slashed his neck and both wrists with a razor blade.

Jacobsen told the youth he only wanted to talk to her. The defence lawyer argued that Jacobsen still loved the woman and only wanted to talk with her. Justice O'Byrne said "I accept the evidence of the accused as to the motive for doing what he did. But I'm not overlooking the fact that terror resulted from the offences." Though charged with attempted murder, the justice found Jacobsen guilty of the lesser offence of assault causing bodily harm and sentenced him to six months. He sentenced him to six months for breaking and entering, to be served concurrently.

Justice O'Byrne commented that he looked upon the whole situation as "analogous to problems that often arise in the course of domestic strife", adding that he gave up long ago trying to understand the bizarre behaviour of people in domesic disputes.

UNITED NURSES OF ALBERTA

Our kind of health care

In recent years Alberta nurses have become increasingly vocal and active through their union, the United Nurses of Alberta (UNA). Unfortunately the generally big and small "c" conservative climate of this province has produced a corresponding increasingly repressive reaction to the nurses' growing political power and confidence. The introduction of Bill 44, which would remove nurses' right to strike, is but the most recent of such reactionary moves affecting Alberta nurses.

The following are exerpts from a talk to Calgary women by Sharon Verrall, president of UNA Local #1. Her presentation provides a clear, in-depth insight into Alberta nurses' historical, political and economic situation.

* * *

There is a lot of turmoil in nursing today and I'd like to identify some influencing factors.

Traditionally, nurses have been described as angels of mercy, doctors' helpers, and obedient, passive employees. One nursing school had as its motto "I see and am silent". Maybe this is why TV thinks we make good wives and mothers. In fact, one study of the portrayal of nurses on TV found nurses scored higher than physicians on only one value, serenity. The greatest surprise is that nurses ranked lower than doctors for humanism, self-sacrifice, duty, and family, and ranked equally in virtue and love - all virtues ascribed to nurses.

And then came the women's movement. I had a hard time reconciling being a feminist and a nurse. Nursing is such a traditional career choice - I felt guilty not to be breaking new ground. I've heard many nurses, when asked what they do, say "I'm just a nurse", but I finally realized that nursing needed women who didn't apologize for what they do and who are willing to raise some shit.

Another development is the new technology and the increased responsibility it has brought for nurses. Patients are much sicker than they used to be. More complex surgical procedures and new medications are keeping alive those who we would have lost a brief few years ago. The boom in technology complicates nursing care. We need more knowledge, care takes more time and nurses have more responsibility. My aunt graduated as a nurse 25 years before I did and she remembers when nurses weren't allowed to take blood pressures. Now the list of procedures we do is enormous and would be meaningless to you. Where I work, the physicians who have the bulk of responsibility for the patients are mostly newly graduated from three-year medical programs at the University of Calgary. I have been in the position of talking a doctor through a procedure he is doing for the first time that I am not allowed to do.

Nursing is trying to define our role seperately from that of physicians assistant, but where do we fit? Saying someone is a born nurse devalues our specific body of knowledge. Arriving at a definition of nursing is difficult but one that I like in spite of its generality is "nursing is doing for the patient that which he would do for himself if he could" - that is, we feed the patient who is unable to feed himself, we wash the patient who is unable to wash himself and we give medications to the patient who is unable to administer his own. You will notice that there is no mention of physician or hospital administration but instead a focus on patient. The program "M.A.S.H." even addressed the issue when Hawkeye says "Nurse is also a verb. Not only is nurse a verb, it is a very different verb than doctor". In the United States they are exploring independent practice whereby if you need nursing care or advice you go directly to a nurse. Your access is not via a doctor or a hospital. In fact , nurses refer patients to doctors and/or hospitals as needed. Carving out independence is hard. I would liken the process to that of becoming your own person separate from your parents.

Which brings us to unionization. Nurses used to bargain through a special division of the Alberta Association of Registered Nurses, which is our professional association and licensing body. Subsequent to a ruling in Saskatchewan about a similar setup, U.N.A. was formed in 1977.

Now we have a union and a new dilemma. How do you reconcile the view of yourself as a self-sacrificing angel of mercy with the image of a union member?

Should nurses strike?

What will happen to my patients if I do strike?

Are the issues important enough for me to go through the trauma of walking out?

How do I feel about those who choose not to come with me, and what do I do about those feelings?

These are the questions nurses are tortured with.

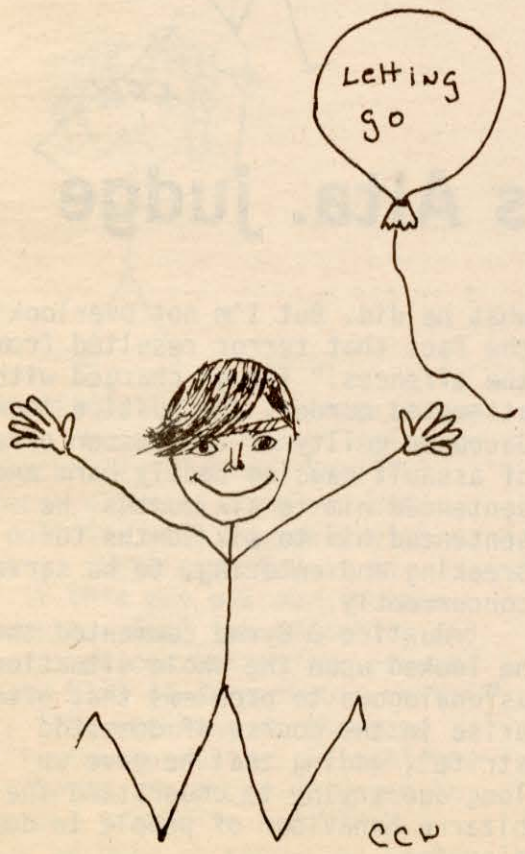
Compare the following quote from Homemaker's Magazine, 1982.:

> "I suggest that hospital nurses have more latent power than any other group of women, they are in demand, are highly organized well educated and work in an essential service".

with

> "I see and am silent"

from 1874, and try to understand the revolution taking place in nursing.



Mentality cont'd.

my life. I'm powerless."

2. Laissez faire "I'm sufficiently comfortable for now--let's not make waves."

3. Reaction "Let's get all the facts; let's write briefs; let's lobby; let's form alliances; let's make more noise; let's let them know we're here and have to be contended with, and oh god I'm tired".

4. Reform "We need more women in power; let's find candidates; let's campaign; let's, if necessary, guilt some of the neat women we know into running for school board/ mayor/premier/prime minister/emperor/ pope etc. and let's not listen to the little voice saying "all power corrupts...."

5. Letting go "It's not my system, it's not of my choosing. By fighting it, I give it energy--so I'm going to turn my back. That way I won't be complicit in the horror."

6. Response-ability "I'm here, I'm part of what's happening. My mind, my body, my emotions, my philosophy, my value system, my analysis are part of Alberta's environment, and will all remain alive and active whatever that may mean.

7. Pollyanna's revenge "Let's start from the ground, envision the kind of society we want, and agree to support only those things in our environment which are in line with our vision. The rest we can either act against or ignore, on our own terms, and using only methods which will support our ultimate goals. And if this means being labelled too trusting and too optimistic --so be it.

Bill 44 cont'd.

the government set up for public hearings into the new labor law. Anyone interested in submitting a brief had only seven days to get them in from the time the legislation was introduced April 12. Furthermore, all briefs had to be submitted to the government in advance of the hearings (by

The insult-to-injury for many about Bill 44 was the process the government set up for public hearings into the new law. Anyone interested in submitting a brief had only seven days to get them in from the time the legislation was introduced April 12. Furthermore, all briefs had to be submitted to the government in advance of the hearings (by Arpil 18) and the government decide which of the submissions would be presented during the hearings. The hearings were to be held April 25-28.

GOVERNMENT CUTS FUNDING OF INCEST TREATMENT

Women and children first

By Susan Vensel

Remember this old scenario? The ship is floundering in heavy seas, the life boats are lowered, and the captain bellows: "Women and children first!"

It appears that members of the Alberta Legislature may have been watching too many old movies. The budget cuts of social services have hit heavily in the area of treatment of incest victims. The victims of incest are the child, usually female, and the mother. The awesome pain that the exposure of incest brings out, frequently destroys its victims unless there is support from a specialized treatment program. Feelings of confusion, fear and guilt shatter the lives of these people. "Responsibility is the issue, and the need to accept the fact that the responsibility for incest lies solely with the offender. This concept frequently takes a year or more of counselling to internalize. Family dysfunctions are deeply ingrained from years of practice, and an intense form of family support is needed to break the female-oriented abuse and self abuse that is created. There are no miracle answers or rapid changes.

So again it is women's needs which are first sacrificed to the god of government budgets. It is well noted that the government prefers to increase the funding of prison systems and juvenile holding centres. The cost in dollars of long term incarceration of incestuous fathers is enormous, and without treatment the father will reabuse. His dysfunction of sexual abuse does not disappear by being locked up for any amount of time, but can be reduced to a less than 1% chance of recidivism through a treatment program. The cost of no treatment for sexually abusive fathers is again borne by the females in the next family he enters. This social cost of victimizing women is too high a price to pay so that one government department can look good on the books. The cost of nontreatment is borne by other departments such as welfare, prisons, juvenile holding centres, foster care, hospitals and government funded counselling agencies. Someone always pays!

The only effective treatment program for incestuous families in Alberta is in Calgary, and their funding has been cut down to 10 hours or less for most families. Ten hours will not even scratch the surface of the families' problems. In many ways to fund 10 hours of treatment and then withhold further funding for treatment does more harm than good.

Calgary's humanistic treatment program works hand in hand with two self-help groups for incestuous families, Parents United, a self-help organization, is for both the offending and non-offending parent. Its affiliate, Daughters and Sons United, provides support for the child victim. These groups are overseen by counsellors or social workers privately trained to provide humanistic facilitating. The groups work as a support system, not a complete treatment program, and funding comes from the community. Treatment of child sexual abuse starts with counselling to help family members to find an alternative to anger and hurt.

Our government needs to take responsibility for funding the direct treatment of sexual abuse through one department. Women are the victims of this crime and the victims of government financial bungling. I encourage all women to take some responsibility for preventing future abuse of our children and ourselves by writing to the Minister of Social Services, Neil Webber, and to your local MPs, regarding funding of sexual abuse counselling. Please help stop this victimization of our sisters.

Creating our own refugee problem

Heard any "Good News, Bad News" jokes lately? Well my girlfriend "Julie" (who does not want me to use her real name) has told me the Provincial Gov't has pulled one on her regarding Social Allowance benefits. It came in the form of a four page Important Message, dated March 25, 1983,she received in the mail.

The "Good News" is that she, along with all other Social Allowance recipients will receive an automatic increase of five per cent in their basic allowance as of July first. Also the amount of income she may bring home without reduction of benefits has been increased from $85 to $115 per month.

And now for the "Bad News" (of which there seems to be a fair bit)

The Gov't is lowering the shelter ceilings and eliminating payments of amounts over the ceilings. The rationale given for this in her letter was "It is expected that there is a reasonalble supply of alternate accomodation available to facilitate moves required". Here are the details of the new shelter ceilings:

As of July 1, 1983, shelter ceilings (including rent, mortgage, fuel, utilities, taxes, fire insurance, condominium fees, maintenance, and lot rental for mobile homes)are as follows:

1 person	$290/mo.
2 persons	430/mo.
3 persons	490/mo.
4 persons	505/mo.
5 persons	525/mo.

" Appeal committees have no jurisdiction to consider exceptions to shelter ceilings" stated the message.

In Julies case this has rather serious ramifications because in October of 82 she signed a one year lease on her $500. a month (plus utilities) town house Compare this with the above ceilings for three people and see what you come up with! Not good,agreed? If she wishes to break her lease and move before October, she must pay one month rental penalty. Also "District Offices and Appeal Committees have been asked to exercise more control over approval of special benefits such as payments for household appliances, home repairs, moving expenses, emergency accomodation and other special needs, Emergency accomodation will be provided to a maximum of 30 rather than 45 days" adds the message.

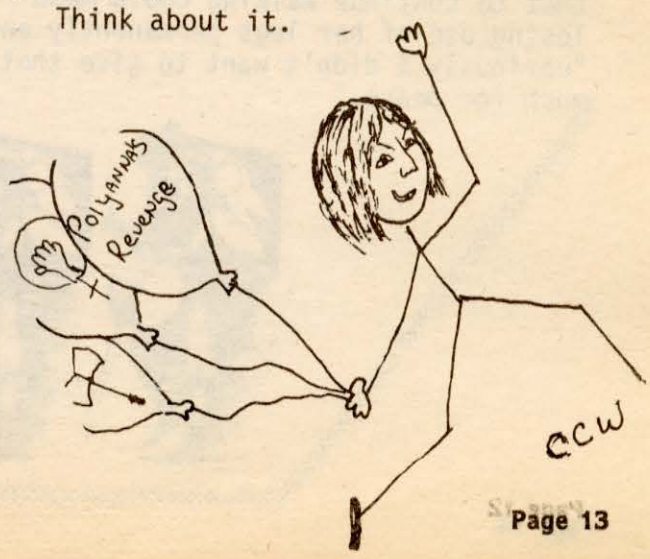
As we can see "Julie" does not have many,if any,alternatives. Her shelter costs have been cut therefore she has to move, which in turn means a one month penalty of $500, the cost of finding a way to move into new accommodation, taking moving expenses out of her already meager benefits .

Where is Julie going to be able to get the money, particularly for a new damage deposit, and the penalty, as well as the rest of the debts incurred because of the cutbacks?

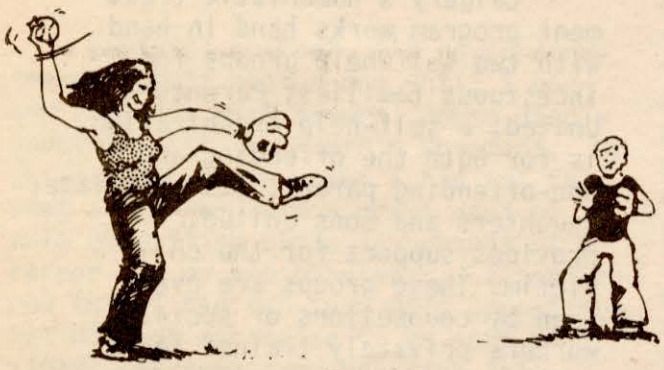
It is all fine and good for the "powers-that-be" to hand down these changes, bue I have to wonder how they can morally wreak havoc with so little consideration for those directly affected. Something smells here.

Think about it.

Look out in the next few weeks for a mass movement of people as they have to leave their homes to find cheaper ones. Look out for people with small children and no money with no place to go. You probably won't have to look very hard. And they'll need help, of course. But Webspinner's "Insult to Injury" department is still reacting to the rumour that people from Social Services and Community Health, the department through which the cutbacks came, are phoning inner city agencies--already reeling under the extra load--and asking them to find volunteers to help people move.



Alberta women's sport assoc. planned



Graphically Speaking

By Sandra Kirby

There is a small group of women in Alberta interested in establishing a branch of The Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport. Sandra Kirby, one of the organisers, has sent us this report...

"I am new in town (Edmonton) but was very active in the Victoria/Vancouver area with regard to women and sport. As an Olympic athlete (1976) I have a vested interest in helping other women to experience the goodness in sport, the love of activity and the feeling of health that is so important.

"The Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport (C.A.A.W.S. is now a firmly developed national organization. The members are from all social backgrounds; are athletes, walkers, disabled; and all ages (8 years to 80 years).

"Women have a right to be healthy and fit and we would like to present a unified challenge to the current male-dominated sport environment. Our rallying point is human rights and the equality of women in sporting and recreational opportunities. This means women and men participating on the same teams as well as separately. (Women usually show up better in non-contact, skill - rather than strength oriented sports.)

"In all cases, we as women should take the opportunities to participate.

"In Alberta we have a mandate to organize at the community level, with Nancy Buzzell from the Department of Physical Education, University of Calgary, as the Calgary contact. She is active in establishing a women's network and is involved in provincial field hockey. In Edmonton, Pam Gilvers and I have taken up the challenge and can be contacted at 102 - 15111 - 45th Ave, Edmonton T6H 5K8. We are ex-gymnasts and ex-rowers, now involved in marathon canoeing. We all travel a lot and would love the opportunity to speak to women's meetings, small community organizations and the like.

"Our plan for Alberta is to organize through a steering committee. We would like to hold a meeting in May or June of interested women who are into planning. Also, we would like to know your current problems, such as - can't get access to a facility, men only programmes, how to start exercising.

"There is a lot of expertise in sport and recreation that needs to be related to women."

If you are interested in this association, contact any of the above women.

New task force cont'd.

A complete proposed statement of philosophy was distributed recently to members of the group and other interested individuals and agencies. This will be discussed at the next general meeting, May 17, 7:30 p.m., at the Family Life Education Council, 223-11 Ave. S.E. Anyone concerned with the issue of family violence is invited to participate. For more information please call Karen Lodl at 262-1115.

Off Our Backs

Blisters for Peace cont'd.

She also wanted badly to walk those last few miles into Edmonton and down to City Hall, but was simply unable.

"It was hard on my ego," she admits. "It was hard not to walk."

Her spirits were lifted just outside Namao when two members of the Common Woman Books collective, to which she belongs, joined her with a banner to march to City Hall.

It was an emotional moment for Clare. She realized the making of the banner was due at least in part, to her 12-day effort on the road for peace. She also felt less alone.

"I didn't have to explain my politics. All of a sudden I'm with these people who undestand exactly what I'm doing."

The excitement built for her as the marchers picked up several hundred protesters at North Town Mall, continued down 97 Street--eventually taking over the road--and on to City Hall.

"You could feel the excitement build up. As we turned the corner we could see all the people at City Hall waiting for us. It was just so emotional. We were all crying away."

Doctors she consulted told her that to continue walking could mean losing use of her legs permanently and, "obviously I didn't want to give that much for peace."

It never occurred to her to end the walk and go home.

"I kept thinking of how I could still be there and not walk. I was looking at the possibility of a wagon, a dog team...finally I thought of a wheelchair."

They found a wheelchair in Smoky Lake, and she began five days being dependent on the group. The experience taught her a lot.

"I find I have a better understanding of what it would be like to be in a wheelchair. I really didn't think people would treat me differently It's subtle--but people don't talk to you as much, they move you around as if you were furniture, ask you how you are very patronizingly and they always refer to the fact that you're in a wheelchair. It's interesting how you're almost not human in a wheelchair."

The chair also made her dependent on whoever was pushing her, and made it impossible to sing or even talk with a group that would one minute be ahead, next minute be behind her.

And the chair itself was uncomfortable.

She began to think about the end of her journey at Namao. Some members of the group were going into Edmonton to friends and family in the evenings, and she says she had to deal with a slight depression at the realization that their cohesive unit was breaking apart.

The hordes at City Hall, the coverage in Vancouver and Toronto papers and the telegrams from the United Nations and the Green Party in Germany add to Clare's conviction that the statement made by the marchers was heard.

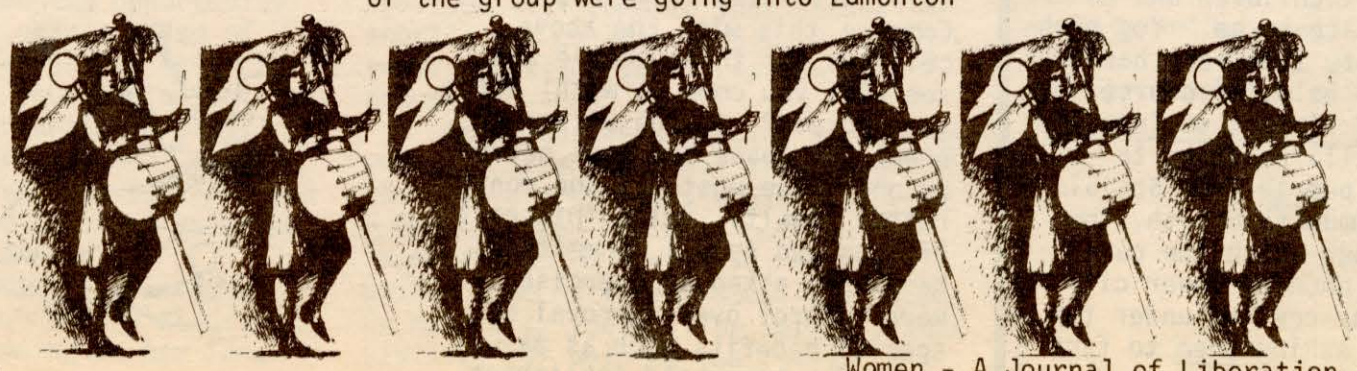
"I really feel like we said something," she concludes.

It has renewed her fighting spirit against the cruise, believing as she does that testing in Alberta can be stopped, and has encouraged her to get more women involved in the fight for peace.

"It really inspired me to get more feminists involved in the peace movement. It's really women who feel the need for peace and yet there aren't any, or at least not as many as I'd like, involved in the peace movement in Alberta."

Although she suggests this may be due to the hierarchical structure of peace groups, she wants women to get involved and make changes.

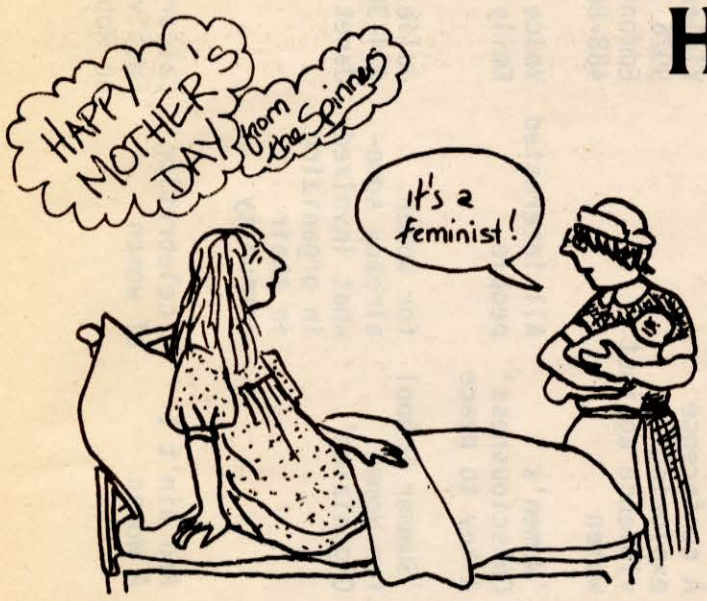
"It's important to do it anyway, --you know."



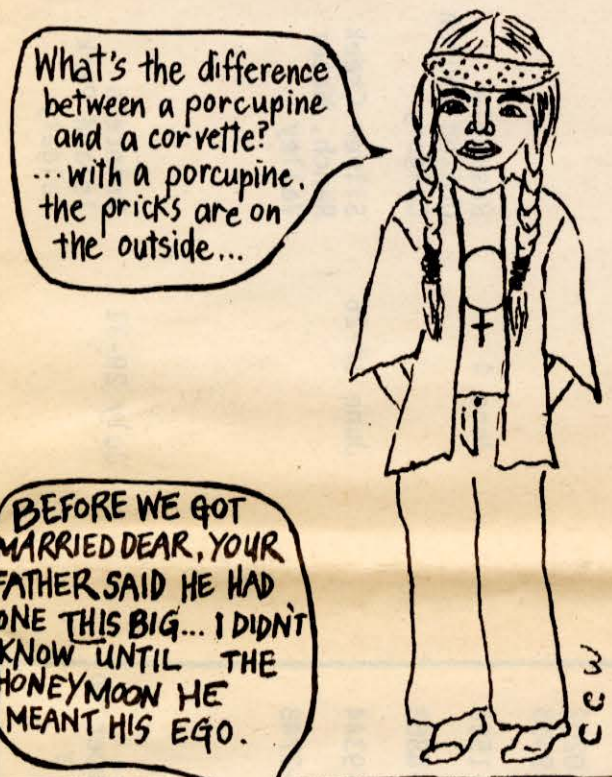
Women - A Journal of Liberation

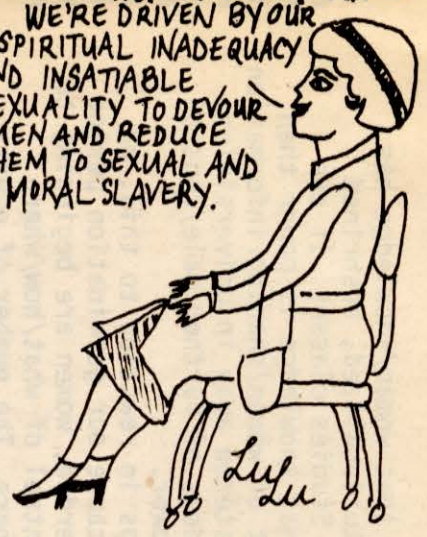
DO YOU KNOW

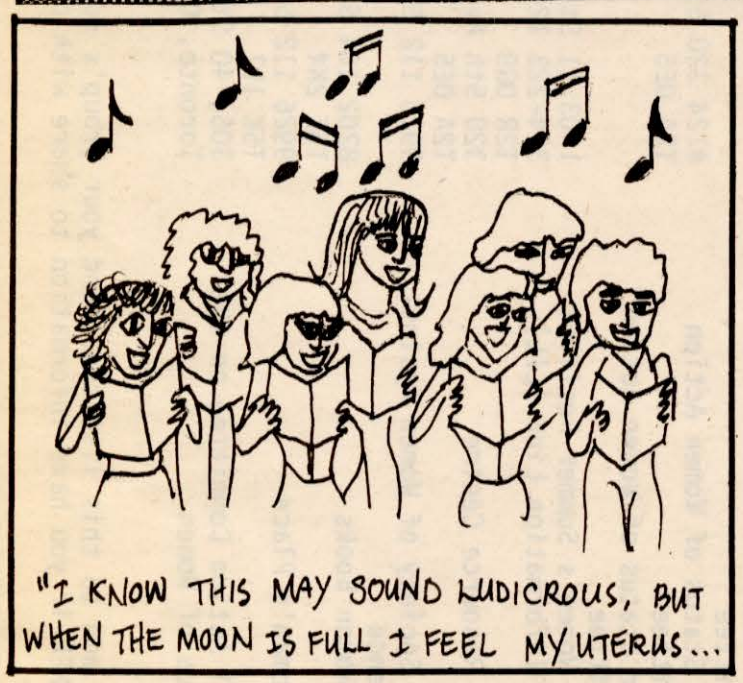
THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT HAS NO SENSE OF HUMOUR?

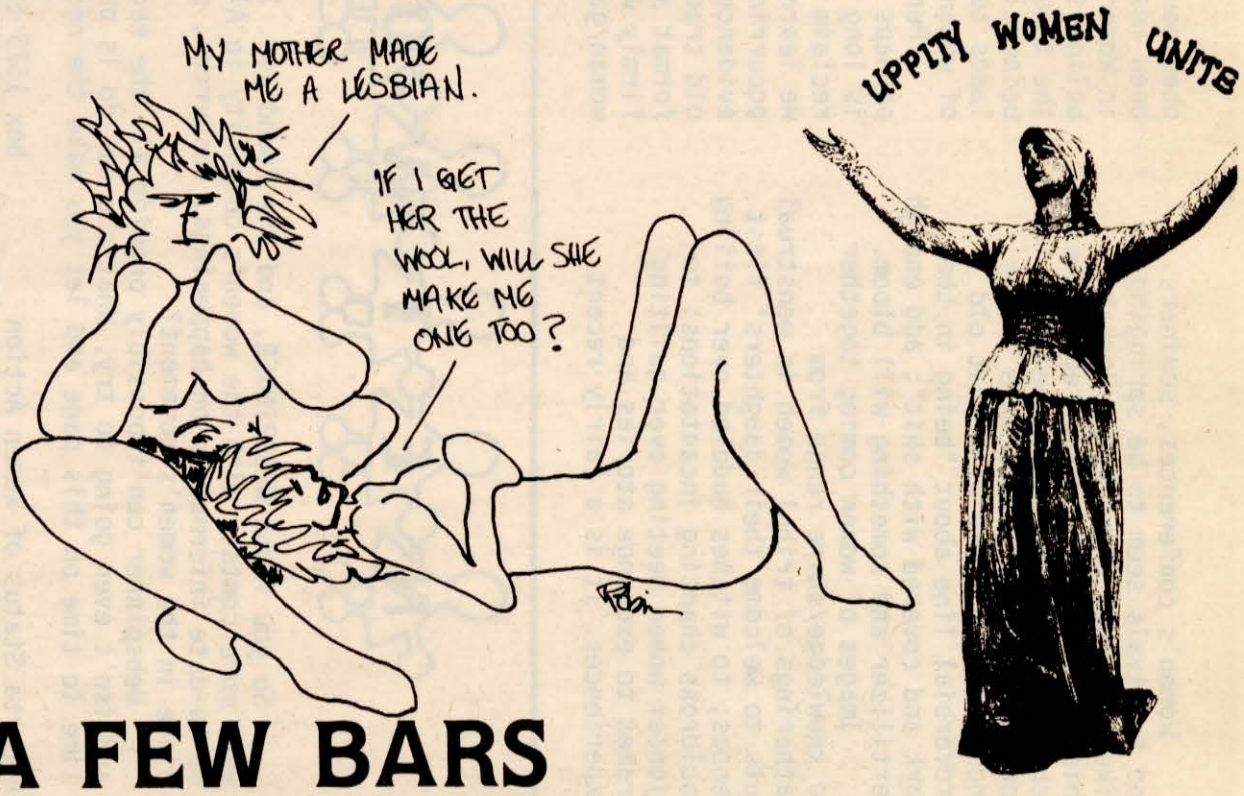


SPRINGTIME WILL NEVER BE THE SAME









NO, BUT HUM A FEW BARS AND I'LL TRY TO SING ALONG

Women's conferences, seminars and festivals seem to be springing up like mushrooms these days. Perhaps this can partly be attributed to the rebirth and growth associated with Spring and Summer; more than likely though it has to do with that old proverbial line about "being in the dark and covered with shit"; add enough fertilizer and something will bloom.

Images of women coming together to knowledge/share range from gatherings of tribal women in menstrual huts to welcome their daughters' first menses; to witches huddled over boiling cauldrons chanting incantations; to pioneer women meeting over quilting frames to exchange stories and experiences. It is a fairly recent phenomenon that woman/knowledge has been institutionalized, enshrined in Women's Studies classes. If one believes that knowledge is power then the thought of women/sharing/information being cloistered away in universities leads to ideas of further male/control of woman/power.

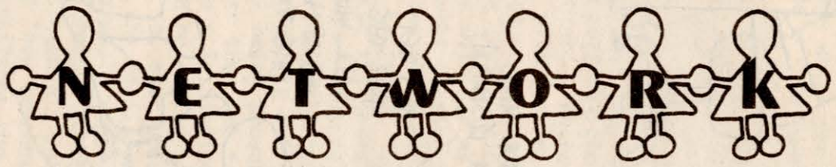
Perhaps in reaction to this, or perhaps because our germination period is long overdue, women are beginning to reclaim control of what/how/where we learn/share. The number of events occurring this Spring/Summer is evidence of Alberta women renewing an old tradition. And the variety of format and subject matter places us firmly within the network of new woman/gathering.

Recent precedents of women learning, link us to a new education/consciousness. The 7th Annual Michigan Womyn's Music Festival involved 10,000 women last year; Hamilton's Woman's World Convention drew an unexpected 7,000 women in its first year; New Voices/New Realities, a conference in Salt Lake City, is now in its fifth year; The Third Annual National Feminist Camp is happening Aug. 5-14 in Maryland.

As for our own women/meets, the next three months are outlined below, from a Conference on Battered Women to a Summer Festival Celebration. As you hear of more women/gatherings please let us know so we can update and enjoy the experience of collective/grow.

By Robin Slater

DATE	PLACE	TITLE	FOR WHOM?	INFO FROM
May 4,5,6	U of A Edmonton	The Battered Woman	Staff and Boards of shelters	Alta Council of Women's Shelters Jessica Hanna 10038 91 Ave Edmonton T6E 2V1
May 12,14,15	Edmonton	Celebration of Women in the Arts	All interested people	Judith Mabey 10654 63 Ave Edmonton T63 2V1
May 13,14	AVC, Calgary	Shattering the Myths	All interested people	Lesbian Mothers Defence Fund Lynn at 264-6328
May 27,28,29	Edmonton	'Ending the Silence' A conference exploring violence against women	All interested women	Alberta Society of Women Against Violence 9926 112 St Edmonton 488-8863
June 4	Rosedale United Church Calgary	'Women's Consciousness' A key to peace	All interested people	Voice of Women Emily 284-1241
June 17-26	Silver Creek Ranch, Water Valley	'Summer School for Women Organizing'	for women already somewhat involved in organizing in their community	Julie Anne LeGras 424-3073 or 474-1270 Janet Maher 433-3229
July 29-31	Prince's Island Park Calgary	And Ain't I A Woman	A celebration of women	Calgary Women's Festival, 244-0202 or Robin 283-7939



So you found WEBSPINNER, and she found you. Is this enough, or do you want more contact with the women's community in Alberta? Do you want to have up-to-date information on happenings, resources, plans and actions taking place in the women's movement?

Webspinner can't possibly provide all the necessary information for you, and isn't even going to try. What she can do is provide brief information from time to time on this page and let you make the necessary connections.

Alberta Status of Women Action Committee	Box 1573 Edmonton T5J 2N7	424-3073
Calgary Status of Women Action Committee	#124 320 5th Ave SE Calgary T2A 0E5	262-1873
Red Deer Status of Women Action Committee		347-2480
Calgary Women's Summer Festival	1403 11 St SW, Calgary	244-0202
Lesbian Information Line (LIL)	314-223 12th Ave SE Calgary T2R 0G9	265-9458
Women's Resource Centre	320 5th Ave SE Calgary T2A 0E5	263-1550
Alberta Society of Women Against Violence	9926 112 St Edmonton	488-8863
Common Woman Books	8202 104 St Edmonton T6E 2N4	432-9344
Every Woman's Place	9926 112 St Edmonton T5K 1L7	488-2748
National Action Committee on the Status of Women	306, 40 St Clair Ave E Toronto, Ontario M4T 1M9	

You can add to this list too. Send your group's name, address and phone number to WEBSPINNER if you have information to share with people who contact you as a result.

And Ain't I A Woman

By Robin Slater

What started as a seemingly impossible vision has, for many women in Calgary, turned into a Mutual Dream; and by the end of July, the Calgary Women's Summer Festival will have networked across Alberta to transform Prince's Island into an enormous celebration of women.

The idea sprang from an information-sharing brunch that had grown over the months from an informal gathering to a large "reservations-in-advance" group. We met to exchange duplicates of pertinent information, to update each other about upcoming conferences and speakers, and to socialize thru discussion of issues and news.

"This is fun", we naively said. "Why don't we see if we can network more Calgary women?" And so it innocently began. We put out feelers and received lots of positive response, ideas and commitments; almost magically we now have fifty women working actively on the project and another hundred working in different capacities, with various responsibilities.

At first we envisioned a huge get-together to do what we had done all along: information share and network. Brunch was out: already there were too many women to talk to across a table, and we quickly outgrew dance-hall ideas. Soon we were looking at spending time together on the island-park in downtown Calgary, wondering how we were ever going to fill two whole days with events and excitement. Now some of the issue co-ordinators are wondering which ideas to postpone to next year.

Once the idea got rolling, the interesting part was to develop an organizational process that would accommodate all the women who might eventually volunteer time and energy, and at the same time remain consistent with our ideal of working as a feminist collective. The most efficient format we could envision was to break the total concept into manageable pieces, each with a co-ordinator(s) and lots of support help; and then facilitate keeping the networking lines clear and usable.

We divided up groups around different Issues (for example: Women in the Media, Herstory, Culture, Immigrant Women, Women and Law); Performances (such as: music workshops, theatre productions, dance performances); and Tasks (Food Fair, Art Gallery, Billeting, Craft Fair, etc.). In the centre of this hub of activity would be the steering committee responsible for fundraising, public relations, operations, security etc.; in other words, the large commitment loads necessary to set this plan into action.

We all had a dream, now we had a process to help head us in the right direction, the next step was to implement our ideas. It was amazing how quickly the pieces began to fall into place. Heather Bishop and Ferron were both contacted and later confirmed to perform concerts and workshops. The "Women in the Church" group started pulling together United, Catholic, and Evangelical church women and began to block out the days with selections of workshops like: Images of God, and Women's Role in the Church. At the same time they were concentrating on pulling together a large ecumenical service for Sunday morning.

Meanwhile the "Health Issues" co-ordinator was busily organizing a Health Fair within the Festival, including ongoing activities and demonstrations as well as an information area. The speaker section plans to include a Mother/Daughter therapy workshop and a panel discussion of patient advocacy. The "Francophone Women" co-ordinator contracted a 5-woman play to be produced in Edmonton and started rehearsing her own poetry-reading.

Another exciting part has been confirmation of well-known personalities who have agreed to be part of our celebration. Doris Anderson, the former editor of Chatelaine magazine, has agreed to give the keynote speech. Bonnie Kreps is prepared to do a workshop titled "Aesthetics of Women in Film", to talk about starting a small press and publishing one's own material, and to preview a film for us that she is still in the process of making. Debra Lewis, co-author of Rape: The Price of Coersive Sexuality, has agreed to discuss rape laws and pornography. We will also write, produce and film a soap opera in conjunction with a lecture Debra will give on popular culture. A native woman chief from Fort McKay, Dorothy McDonald, is coming to speak about Women and Politics, and Native Women's Rights. And the list continues to grow...

To keep all this influx organized and maintain our information flow, we have established a Contact Centre at 1403 - 11 St. S.W. The phone number is 244-0202 and we are staffed with volunteers to keep the network channels open. We are also able to provide information that is updated on many of the events happening in Calgary and around Alberta.

Prior to the Festival itself we are presenting fund-raising events that tie in directly with the overall view of celebrating. May 24 we are presenting Louise May who will be giving a slide presentation: "Amazon and Warrior Women: our Foremothers on the Frontlines". In June we will host an "Alternative Fashion Show". We have a baseball tournament and dance lined up for early July. There will be a French Women's Film Festival at the Plaza Theatre on July 27.

The Festival itself will begin at noon, July 29, with continuous films and an outdoor concert on the Island that evening. Then the tents, tipis and parachutes will go up to house all the activities, workshops, speakers and panels for both Saturday and Sunday, July 30 and 31.

Please help us make this Dream come true. We still need help in many ways and any time or energy you could donate would be greatly appreciated. We would be happy to plug you into our network and get you involved with the areas or issues of your concern.

I can't wait for summer; And Ain't I A Woman....

New task force

By Robin Slater

The Calgary Task Force for the Prevention of Family Violence is a coalition which has evolved over the last several months, and is now at the stage of establishing a working philosophy. The idea for this organization came from a commitment to stop family violence, developed by the end of a consultation called "Malice in Waltonland", held last November at the University of Calgary.

The title was a description of the paradox implicit in family violence, pointing out that although the family "has always been considered society's most loving and supportive institution, it is also the most violent setting that the average civilian citizen will experience". Professor Murray Straus, Director of the Family Violence Research Program, at the University of New Hampshire, was the resource person at the conference. He provided a detailed analysis of available statistics to substantiate this concept. He emphasized that many factors combined to create a total portrait of family violence, not the least of which is the violent society in which we live. Strauss also outlined the cycles of family violence pointing out that abused children or those who see their mothers battered would be more likely to grow up living in violent situations, either as batterers or their victims.

After the consultation there appeared to be a need to network individuals and agencies concerned and/or dealing with family violence. The first meeting of the Task Force was simply to determine if this kind of group would be useful and if so, would there be interest, support, and commitment to organize it. The response was encouraging and enthusiastic and by the end of the group discussions there was a long, varied list of needs and concerns and also a list of hopes for the role of a coalition. Then, over the next two months the planning committee began the process of synthesizing a common focus from the input of all the individuals coming to the meetings and sharing their concerns.

The proposed philosophy is directed towards three areas:

1) to co-ordinate services, especially to assess and fill gaps between existing services and to offer a network support system
2) to foster an awareness of domestic violence through educational programs and research
3) to advocate and lobby for laws and programs that will provide better service and facilitate preventative measures.

The intent is to become a community task force rather than to provide direct service.

Cont'd. p. 14

Reviews

Great expectations

Hey, I'm going to school
Yeh, 20 years later
After the marriage and the three
  kids and all the shitty jobs
I'm going back to school
Art school, hey
I'm inspired
My teacher's a practising artist
  and he's witty and philosophical
  and challenging
He says ask questions, question your
  assumptions
Who says a coffee cup is round?
I'm happy as a bee
Humming, making pots for my plants
Sculptures that question change,
  but with humour
That speak of my search for self,
  but with humour
Every piece I screw up and it
  breaks here or cracks there or
  doesn't quite flow into the
  place it's pointing to,
But that's OK

I'm learning, I'm getting braver,
  everything's grand and then
  during a lecture that teacher in
  his flow of words saying humour
  is important, showing us in
  pictures his appreciation of
  other's visual puns, "I don't
  care if you 'like' it or not"
  he says, "some subject matter is
  bizarre", and flashes on the
  screen for our education the
  piece called the "herinal"
A woman's body no not her whole body
  not her head nor her hands nor
  her feet nor her heart just her
  vagina and her breasts turned
  inside out turned into a pink and
  white urinal held to the floor by
  four giant screws
the big fuck
two footprints impressed into the
  floor in front

My world gnashes its teeth and
  crashes and falls screaming as
  my eyes lower from the teacher's
  piercing challenging and fear-
  filled eyes and my lips are
  smiling to hide my rage and shame
I get up and pace
and smoke full of hate
my body's a toilet and he wants me
  to appreciate the craftsmanshit
my body's a toilet and he wants me
  to laugh at
that man's wit
  URINAL HERINAL hahaha
Our bodies are toilets and this
  is art
My body, our bodies, your body, the
  her-in-all

To the artist and teacher I say;
Question your assumptions I say.
I suppose you lie in bed at
  night tossing fearfully
  in dreams of one-breasted
  Amazons
I suppose you cry in your beer
  that women are ball-busters,
  castrating bitches
I suppose you wonder why you're
  afraid.

Nelle Olsen

Armatrading's new album

THE KEY
Joan Armatrading
(A & M)

Like unseasonably fine weather, Joan Armatrading is always the source of unexpected delights. Long recognized as an emotive singer with considerable guitar skills, she has been at times unfairly tagged as just another "sensitive" songwriter. With Walk Under Ladders in 1981--a brave move into the urgent spirit of new wave--her cheerful sound earned new respect and listeners. While that album took daring musical steps, The Key covers new ground lyrically. The shamelessly honest songs about emotion are still present, but there is also a new toughness: the taunting blackmail in Tell Tale ("Now I got things that I can tell your friends"), the jealous challenge to a love interest in Drop the Pilot or the simple observation about romance in the title cut ("You tease me cos you know I need you"). While Armatrading has ventured forward with her words, the music on The Key is conservative. Except for the devilish guitar and drums on The Dealer and the funky rhythm of the title song, she has returned to acoustic guitar and familiar rock arrangements. Still, Joan Armatrading is a performer who likely has more surprises to follow.
(Taken from Macleans, April 25/83)

"And you learn that you
  really can endure....
That you really are strong and you
  really do have worth.
And you learn and learn...
with every goodbye you learn..."
(anonymous)

THE NATURE OF THIS FLOWER IS TO BLOOM

Rebellious Living
Against the Elemental Crush
A Song of Colour
Blooming
For Deserving Eyes
Blooming Gloriously
For its Self

Revolutionary Petunia

Alice Walker

Not A Love Story

A FILM ABOUT PORNOGRAPHY

By Susan Vensel

NOT A LOVE STORY is clearly a voice against pornography. While the film does not attempt to provide solutions to this complex social problem, it does raise many questions. It is not so much a call to specific action as it is an appeal to the viewer's emotions and intellect. By increasing our awareness of the harmful nature of pornography and by clearly revealing its destructive consequences, the film allows us to recognize and evaluate the effects of pornography on our own lives. By creating a forum for discussion it encourages us to find possibilities for positive personal action.

Canadian writer and feminist Margaret Atwood makes a personal statement through a reading of her poem, "A Women's Issue". The emotional and psychological effects of pornography on men are explored by a discussion group organized by "Men Against Male Violence".

I found this movie very accurate and very painful. I cried - a first for me - to cry at a movie. I felt sickened and full of rage and - momentarily - powerless. I spent two hours following this movie debriefing with the people I attended. It was a very moving and sharing time for us all. I highly recommend this movie to all women and men as a vehicle to clearer understanding and communication.

Response cont'd.

territory, cowardly assassinates our unarmed population, including children, such as in the case of Guadalupe Ruiz and Pedro Cruz, both 13 years old, and members of the volunteer coffee harvest brigade. In the face of this situation, we reiterate one more time our strong conviction to continue fighting for a just and true peace, and our intention to defend the Sandinista Revolution --- at whatever cost.

Year of the Struggle for
Peace and Self-Determination
from the Women's Association
of Nicaragua"

Heather Bishop

By Susan Vensel.

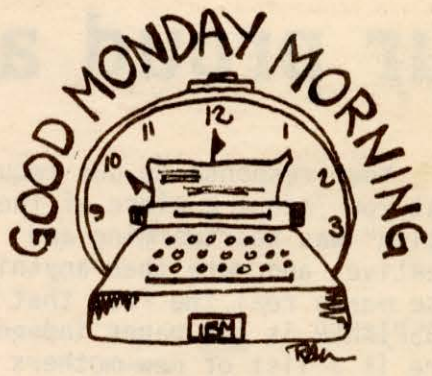
Heather Bishop was at the Calgary Library on April 22. She became a very real and warm person to me because she shared so much of herself. She grew up in a small town in Saskatchewan and studied classical piano. At the age of 11, an uncle introduced her to the sounds of Nina Simone. Since then she has never looked back. She draws upon her personal experience and that of those close to her to produce songs which touch us. In this way she shares herself with us in her music.

Heather's songs vary in style from blues to folk, but usually they are written within the context of her own life experience. The energy she directs toward supporting the power and uniqueness of all women reaches her audience. Also she takes the time to share the origins, in herself, from which each song has emerged. She refers to friends, to the earth, to the cruise missile and to situations close to her and others. She creates a personal connection with each of us.

Heather's love for women is strongly felt. "I Love Women who Laugh" has to be the hit of her new album, by the same name. It is a song that emphasizes women's experience of reaching out and sharing with the support of other women who share. Her children's songs "Belly Button" and "Hippopotamus" bring out her sense of humour. Heather's sincerity and drive are the special gifts she shares.

Experience Heather Bishop! She will stir your heart.

Everywoman's Almanac



By Rosemary Hamel

An excellent 30-minute film by Laura Sky dealing with the major problems plaguing working women in offices today. With the advent of computers, processors, terminals, etc..., women are fast losing the opportunity to use their valuable skills. Organized together women are working to change this computerized office so that they can continue to use their valuable skills and not just be automated button pushers.

I recommend this film because of the spirit and optimism these women are displaying in their battle to recognize their dreams and goals as working women. The essence of this film will really give a boost to any woman who has ever had to face these situations in the course of her career.

I feel this film would be of interest to a great number of different groups working in Womens Issues, Career Choices, Occupational Health and Safety, and many, many more. The film is available through: SKYWORKS, 566 Palmerton Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6G 2P7.

C'mon Baby __ __ What's The Matter?

By RaeAnn Robertson

The audience waits expectantly for the lights to dim and for the play to start. Suddenly, a woman near the front turns to face a man nearby and asks him loudly to "please stop staring." As her female companion sinks lower and lower into the chair beside her, the woman stands up angrily and demands to know why this man continues to stare. She is creating a scene and her companion gets up embarrassed and suggests they move to the back of the theatre. At least there they can't be leered at. The two women then walk up onto the stage and we realize that the play has already begun. As the lights dim, the women gaze up into the audience expectantly, just as we gaze at them. They have come to perform and we have come to see a play about sexual harrassment.

"C'mon baby, what's the matter with you?" is a play conceived and performed by the "Theatre Parminou" collective of Victoriaville, Quebec. The eighteen (or so) member collective has been together for ten years now and have been performing this play for the last two years. Although it has been performed over one hundred times in French, the English version of the play was performed for two full house audiences at the Edmonton Art Gallery last week as part of a cross Canada tour. Sponsored by several unions and women's organizations, the play deals in a humorous and imaginative way with the many forms of sexual harrassment encountered by women every day. Whether as children or wives at home, or as employees in the workplace, or as women on the street, the play is marvelously successful in illustrating the embarrassment and degradation suffered by victims of sexual harrassment.

After the initial shock to the audience, the two women transform into two pyjama-clad girls at a sleep over. During the play these two girls easily slip in and out of games of "make-believe" in which they pretend at being grown ups. With a minimum of props, they present a series of short scenes or vignettes in which they dramatize the harrassment of women at the hands of their husbands, employers and strangers. This format is very flexible and allows the women to portray many different versions of the problem. We see a wife subjected to verbal abuse and subtle put-downs by her grumpy childish husband in the morning. He eventually stalks off to

work where his attention is divided between his secretary's breasts and those of the undeserving women he interviews. Suddenly the scene switches back to the two young girls when the one portraying the female characters protests the treatment she's receiving. They decide to change the scene to a restaurant where the other girl's mother works. Working in a frenzied robot-like manner, the poor woman is brow-beaten by her boss to work faster and faster. To add to this, imaginary customers rudely shout their orders at her. And so on...

The quick scene changes encourage the audience to keep on its toes, and there is a remarkable smoothness with which they switch roles and characters. Their characters are witty caricatures of male and female roles, and their dramatization of the incidents we all go through as women demonstrates an amazing clarity of vision. In fact it is this clarity which is the strong point of the play. We are encouraged to see the sexist behaviour of men in a new light. We are shown that the threatening behaviour of men should not be tolerated. Sexism should not be the defining characteristic of male-female relationships.

As the play nears the end, the two girls disappear off to bed and their mothers return home after an evening at the theatre (remember the two women at the beginning of the play?) Whereas the girls presented incidents of sexual harrassment, the two women begin to express their anger and discuss what can be done to change things. They come up with a few extremely funny individual solutions that are designed to embarrass the men who try to embarrass them. They discuss the possibility of joining a union. As we witness

Cont'd on p. 20

Our proud adoptive mothers

Your response to our request that you "adopt a piece of the action" was heartwarming and creative, and more than anything else makes real the fact that WEBSPINNER is our paper indeed. Here is a list of new mothers with their babies - congratulations and thanks to you all!

ADOPTED - A - PRINTER
Sheilah Edington, Edmonton
Susan Jackel, Edmonton.

ADOPTED - A - TYPESETTER
Amanda LeRougetel, Edmonton.

ADOPTED - A - TELEPHONE
Janina Vanderpost, Edmonton.

ADOPTED -A - WORKSHOP
Jo Evans, Vancouver.
Donna Vine, Calgary.

ADOPTED -A - MAILING
Dee Blair, Bowser, BC.
Mary Johnson, Edmonton.
Gertraud Kreiner, Whitecourt.
Kathi Pelletier, Edmonton.
Karen Wyllie, Calgary.

ADOPTED PENCILS
Wendy Pike, Edson.

UNSPECIFIED DONATIONS
Donna Anthony, Edmonton.
Jacquelyn Burles, Yellowknife.
Ardelle Dudley, Ft. Saskatchewan.
Maria Eriksen, Calgary.
Gloria Filax, Edmonton.
Julie Anne Le Gras, Edmonton.
Kathie Moules, Edmonton.
Claudette Reed-Upton, Calgary.
Joan Rogers, Edmonton.
Ursi Stoecklin, Calgary.
Donna Tink, Grande Prairie.

...here's how you can be one too!

Here are some ideas - and your own. Suggest some of the larger items to your women's group or business. Adoptive parents will be listed in the next issue unless you ask to remain anonymous.

ADOPT A PRINTER. $100.00
will print 1,000 copies

ADOPT A TYPESETTER. $ 50.00
will provide snappy typeset headlines for a whole issue.

ADOPT A TYPEWRITER. $ 30.00
will rent a typewriter for a workshop.

ADOPT A TELEPHONE. $ 20.00
would allow for much more "around the province" news.

ADOPT A WORKSHOP. $ 15.00
pays for 100 km of travel expense.

ADOPT A MAILING. $ 3.70
will mail Webspinner to 10 more women.

ADOPT A PENCIL. $ 1.00
or several!

ALL CORREPONDENCE TO:
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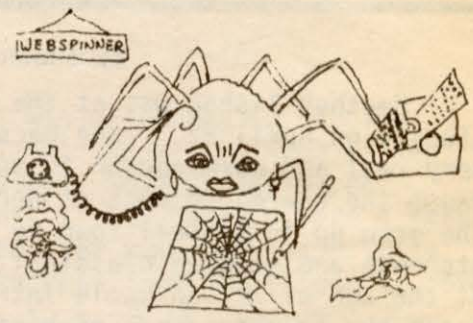
MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO WEBSPINNER.

Spiderladies



You have received this issue of WEBSPINNER thanks to the Spider Ladies again. The following volunteers worked hard as a group in the old YWCA from Saturday through Tuesday to get it printed:
Andrea Ansbacher
Linda Brown Wallace
Meaghan Dean
Clare Edington
Nola Erhardt
Rose Hamel
Barb Harvey
Mair
Susan McLeod
Kate Partridge
RaeAnn Robertson
Robin Slater
Patricia Stansfield
Susan Vensel
Heather Williams
Front page photo courtesty
Calgary Women's Newspaper

C'MON BABY cont'd from p. 19

their consciousness being raised, the play tends toward preaching solutions. Although there is no doubt that the search for solutions to the problem of sexual harrassment is an important one, I felt the answers they provided were a bit too glib, a bit too quick off the mark. However, this is a minor criticism and does very little to detract from the timely message the play conveyed: if we are really committed to the liberation of women, we must recognize and confront the problem of sexual harrassment with a view to eliminating it as an expression of men's attitudes toward women.

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I want to advertise in future issues. Please send details.

I can distribute _____ copies.

I want a workshop to happen in my community. Will someone please call and discuss this with me?

I Hope to contribute articles _____ news _____ calendar events _____

photographs _____ graphics _____ cartoons _____

for the next issue, and I have noted the June 10th deadline.

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ CODE _____

SCHEDULE

Next Webspinner will be put out at the Summer School for Women Organizing, June 17-26. See you there?

and then
Fort McMurray - August 20-23
and then -
Your community?